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THE INTRUSIONS OF PEGGY.[1]

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CHAPTER XX.

PURELY BUSINESS.

THEY did not know what they had been summoned for, and they were rather discontented.

'Just in the middle of a business man's business day!' ejaculated Arty Kane.

'Just as I'm generally sat down comfortably to lunch!' Miles Childwick grumbled.

'Just when I'm settling down to work after breakfast!' moaned Arty.

They were waiting in the sitting-room at Harriet Street. It was 2.15 in the afternoon. A hansom stood in the street; they had chartered it, according to orders received.

'What does she want us for?' asked Arty.

'A wanton display of dominion, in all likelihood,' suggested Miles gloomily.

'I'm not under her dominion,' objected Arty, who was for the moment devoted to a girl in the country.

'I've always maintained that you were no true poet,' said Miles disagreeably.

Peggy burst in on them—a Peggy raised, as it seemed, to some huge power of even the normal Peggy. She carried a lean little leather bag.

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'Is the cab there?' she cried.

'All things in their order. We are here,' Miles reminded her with dignity.

'We've no time to lose,' Peggy announced. 'We've two places to go to, and we've got to be back here by a certain time—and I hope we shall bring somebody with us.'

'In the hansom?' asked Arty resignedly.

'In two hansoms—at least you know what I mean,' said Peggy.

'Isn't she a picture, Arty? Dear me, I beg your pardon, Miss Ryle. I didn't observe your presence. What happens to have painted you red to-day?'

'I'm in a terrible fright about—about something, all the same. Now come along. One of you is to get on one side of me and the other on the other; and you're to guard me. Do you see?'

'Orders, Arty!'

They ranged themselves as they were commanded, and escorted Peggy downstairs.

'Doesn't the hansom present a difficulty?' asked Arty.

'No. I sit in the middle, leaning back, you sit on each side, leaning forward.'

'Reversing the proper order of things, Miles——'

'In order to intercept the dagger of the assassin, Arty. And where to, General?'

'The London and County Bank, Trafalgar Square,' said Peggy, with an irrepressible gurgle.

'By the memory of my mother, I swear it was no forgery! 'Twas but an unaccustomed pen,' murmured Miles.

'I am equal to giving the order,' declared Arty proudly; he gave it with a flourish.

'How soon are we to have a look-in, Peggy?'

'Hush! She's killed another uncle!'

When the world smiled, Peggy Ryle laughed aloud. It smiled to-day.

'See me as far as the door of the bank and wait outside,' she commanded, when she recovered articulate gravity.

Their external gloom deepened; they were enjoying themselves immensely. Peggy's orders were precisely executed.

'Present it with a firm countenance,' Miles advised, as she left them at the entrance. 'Confidence, but no bravado!'

'It is no longer a capital offence,' said Arty encouragingly. 'You won't be hanged in silk knee-breeches, like Mr. Fauntleroy.'

Peggy marched into the bank. She opened the lean little bag, and took forth a slip of paper. This she handed to a remarkably tall and prim young man behind the counter. He spoilt his own effect by wearing spectacles, but accuracy is essential in a bank.

He looked at the amount on the cheque; then he looked at Peggy. The combined effect seemed staggering. He took off his spectacles, wiped them, and replaced them with an air of meaning to see clearly this time. He turned the cheque over. 'Margaret Ryle' met him in bold and decided characters. Tradition came to his rescue.

'How will you take it?' he asked.

Peggy burst out joyously: 'It's really all right, then?'

The prim clerk almost jumped. 'I—I presume so,' he stammered, and fled precipitately from the first counter to the third.

Peggy waited in some anxiety; old prepossessions were strong on her. After all, to write a cheque is one thing, to have it honoured depends on a variety of circumstances.

'Quite correct,' said the clerk, returning. He was puzzled; he hazarded a suggestion: 'Do you—er—wish to open——?'

'Notes, please,' said Peggy.

He opened a drawer with many compartments.

'Hundreds!' cried Peggy suddenly. She explained afterwards that she had wanted as much 'crackle' as the little bag would hold.

The clerk licked his forefinger. 'One—two—three—four——'

'Why should he ever stop?' thought Peggy, looking on with the sensation a millionaire might have if he could keep his freshness.

'Thank you very much,' she beamed, with a gratitude almost obtrusive, as she put the notes in the bag. She was aware that it is not correct to look surprised when your friends' cheques are honoured, but she was not quite able to hold the feeling in repression.

Her bodyguard flung away half-consumed cigarettes and resigned themselves to their duties. A glance at the little bag showed that it had grown quite fat.

'Be very, very careful of me now,' ordered Peggy, as she stepped warily towards the hansom.

'There are seventy thousand thieves known to the police,' said Arty.

'Which gives one an idea of the mass of undiscovered crime in London,' added Miles. 'Now where to, *mon Général?*'

'346 Cadogan Square,' Peggy told them. 'Oh, how I wish I could have a cigarette!'

Both sympathetically offered to have one for her.

'The smoke will embarrass the assassin's aim,' Miles opined sagely.

Arty broke out in a sudden discovery.

'You're going to Fricker's!' he cried.

'I have an appointment with Mr. Fricker,' said Peggy, with pretended carelessness.

'At last, Arty, I shall see the mansions of the gilt.'

'No, you'll wait outside,' Peggy informed him, with a cruelty spoilt by bubbling mirth.

'Is that where we're to pick up the other passenger?' asked Arty.

'You talk as if everything was so very easy!' said Peggy rather indignantly.

'Being anywhere near a bank always has that effect on me,' he apologised.

'Now, one on each side—and be careful,' Peggy implored as the cab stopped in Cadogan Square. 'If anything happened now——!' Her tongue and her imagination failed.

'If you've got any money, you'll leave it there,' Miles prophesied, pointing at the Fricker door.

'Shall I?' cried Peggy in joyous defiance, as she sprang from the cab.

'Mayn't we even sit in the hall?' wailed Arty.

'Wait outside,' she commanded, with friendly curtness.

The door closed on her, the butler and footman showing her in with an air of satisfied expectancy.

'Who's to pay the cab?' exclaimed Arty, smitten with a sudden apprehension.

'Don't you remember being reviewed under the heading of "The Young Ravens"?' asked Miles, a little unkindly, but with a tranquil trust in the future.

That answer might not have satisfied the cabman. It closed the question for Arty Kane. They linked arms and walked up and down the square, discussing Shakespeare's habit of

indulging in soliloquy. 'Which is bad art, but good business,' Miles pronounced. Of course Arty differed.

'The study, if you please, miss,' said the butler to Peggy Ryle. She followed him across the fawn-coloured mat which had once proved itself to possess such detective qualities.

Rooms change their aspects as much as faces; he who looks brings to each his own interpretation, and sees himself as much as that on which he gazes. The study was very different now to Peggy from what it had seemed on her previous entry. Very possibly Daniel experienced much the same variety of estimate touching the Lions' Den before he went in and after he came out.

Fricker appeared. He had lunched abstemiously, as was his wont, but daintily, as was Mrs. Fricker's business. He expected amusement; neither his heart nor his digestion was likely to be disturbed. An appeal for pity from Peggy Ryle's lips seemed to promise the maximum of enjoyment combined with the minimum of disturbance to business.

'So you've come back, Miss Ryle?' He gave her his lean, dry, strong hand.

'I told you I might,' she nodded, as she sat down in her old seat, opposite to his arm-chair.

'You've got the money?' His tone was one of easy pleasant mockery.

'It's no use trying to—to beat you down, I suppose?' asked Peggy, with an expression of exaggerated woe.

But he was too sharp for her. He did not fall into her artless trap. He was lighting his cigar, but he broke off the operation (it was not often that he had been known to do that), and leant across the table towards her.

'My God, child, have you got the money?' he asked her in a sort of excitement.

'Yes, yes, yes!' she broke out. Had not that fact been bottled up in her for hours? His question cut the wire. A metaphor derived from champagne is in no sort inappropriate.

'You've got it? Where have you got it from?'

'Your principle is not to ask that, Mr. Fricker.'

'He must be very fond of you.'

'You're utterly wrong—and rather vulgar,' said Peggy Ryle.

'On the table with it!' laughed Fricker.

She threw the little bag across the table. 'Oh, and have you a cigarette, Mr. Fricker?' she implored.

Fricker gave a short laugh, and pushed a silver box across to her. She leant back in an extraordinary perfection of pleasure.

'There are a lot of these notes,' he said. 'Are cheques out of fashion, Miss Ryle?'

'You're so suspicious,' she retorted. Apart from difficulties about a banking account, she would not have missed handling the notes for worlds.

He counted them carefully. 'Correct!' he pronounced.

'And here's your letter!' she cried, producing it from her pocket; the action was a veritable *coup de théâtre*.

'Oh, I remember my letter,' he said with a smile—and a brow knit in vexation. Then he looked across the table at her. 'I'd have betted ten to one against it,' he remarked.

'You underrate the odds,' Peggy told him in a triumph that really invited Nemesis. 'I'd have betted a thousand to one when I left your house.'

'You're a wonderful girl,' said Fricker. 'How the devil did you do it?'

She grew sober for a moment. 'I'm ashamed of how I did it.' Then she burst out again victoriously: 'But I'd do it again, Mr. Fricker!'

'You have all the elements of greatness,' said he, with a gravity that was affected and yet did not seem entirely pretence. 'You've got three thousand five hundred pounds out of somebody——'

'I've got four thousand,' interrupted Peggy.

'But five hundred was——'

'That's not there! That's kept for me. That's the most splendid part of it all!' In that indeed seemed to her to lie the finest proof of victory. The rest might have been shame; that her five hundred lay intact meant change of heart. She had not pressed her five hundred on Airey Newton. There are times when everything should be taken, as there are when all should be given; her instinct had told her that.

Fricker smiled again; his deft fingers parted the notes into two uneven heaps. The fingers seemed to work of their own accord and to have eyes of their own, for his eyes did not leave Peggy Ryle's face.

'Is the man in love with you?' He could not help returning to that explanation.

'Not a farthing, if he had been!' cried Peggy.

'Then he's an old man, or a fool.'

'Why can't I be angry with you?' she cried in an amused despair. 'Are—are greed and—nonsense the only things you know?'

'Are you finding new words for love?' he asked with a sneer.

Peggy laughed. 'That's really not bad,' she admitted candidly. Under the circumstances she did not grudge Fricker a verbal victory. The poor man was badly beaten; let him have his gibe!

He had made his two heaps of notes—a larger and a smaller; his hand wavered undecidedly over them.

'I can trust you to do what you said you would?' she asked suddenly.

'No less—and no more. That's an essential part of my policy,' he assured her.

'And Mrs. Trevalla is free of Glowing Stars? And you'll tell her what you promised?'

'I'll take them over, with the liability. Yes, and I'll tell her.'

He spoke rather absently; his mind seemed to be on something else. When he spoke again, there was an odd—perhaps an unprecedented—embarrassment in his manner.

'I see my way to doing something with Glowing Stars. Money must go into it—the calls must be paid—but I think some of the money might come out again.' He looked at Peggy; he saw her gloriously triumphant eyes, her cheeks flushed with the intoxication of achievement. The impulse was on him to exalt her more. 'I should have done very well if I'd bargained with you for three thousand.'

'It would have seemed almost as impossible. And you wouldn't! You wanted more than market value for your pound of flesh!'

He pushed the smaller of the two heaps that he had made across to her with a swift motion of his hand; the hand trembled a little, but his voice was hard and dry.

'Take back the extra thousand and call it square, Miss Ryle,' said he.

Peggy laid down her cigarette and stared at the heap of notes he pushed across to her.

'What?' she exclaimed in the despair of blank astonishment; she could not grasp the idea.

'Take those back. I shall do very well with these.'

He took up his cigar again, and this time he lit it. To Peggy the room seemed to go round.

'Why do you do that?' she demanded.

'On my word, I don't know. Your infernal pluck, I think,' he said in a puzzled tone.

'I won't have it. It was a bargain.'

'It's not your money, you may remember.'

Peggy had forgotten that.

'It might be a pleasant surprise to—to your friend,' he went on. 'And, if you'll let me do it, it will, Miss Ryle, be rather a pleasant change to me.'

'Why do you do it?' she asked again.

He made her an odd answer—very odd, to come from him. 'Because of the look in your eyes, my dear.'

His tone was free from all offence now; he spoke as a father might. If his words surprised her to wonder, he had no better understanding of hers:—

'You too, you too!' she whispered, and the eyes which had moved him grew misty.

'Come, don't refuse me,' he said. 'Take it back to your friend. He'll find a use for it.'

He seemed to touch a spring in her, to give her a cue.

'Yes, yes!' she assented eagerly. 'Perhaps there would be a use for it. Do you give it me? Freely, freely?'

'Freely,' answered Fricker. 'And all you want shall be said to Mrs. Trevalla.'

Peggy opened her bag and began to put the notes in; but she looked still at Fricker.

'Did you ever think of anything like this?' she asked in a new burst of confidence.

'No, I didn't,' he answered, with a brusque laugh.

'You like doing it?'

'Well, was there any compulsion, Miss Ryle?'

'I shall take it,' she said, 'and I thank you very much.'

'I should have been distressed if you hadn't taken it,' said he.

Peggy knew that he spoke truth, strange as the truth might be. She had an impulse to laugh, an impulse to cry. Fricker's quiet face quelled both in her.

'And that finishes our business, I suppose?' he asked.

'It's understood that you don't worry Trix any more?'

'Henceforward Mrs. Trevalla ceases to exist for me.' He was really quite in the same tale with Mrs. Bonfill and society at large.

His declaration seemed to amuse Peggy. 'Oh, well, that's putting it rather strongly, perhaps,' she murmured.

'Not a bit!' retorted Fricker, with his confident contemptuousness.

'You can never tell how you may run up against people,' remarked Peggy, with a mature sagacity.

He leant back, looking at her. 'I've learnt to think that your observations have a meaning, Miss Ryle.'

'Yes,' Peggy confessed. 'But I don't exactly know——' She frowned a moment, and then smiled with the brightness of a new idea. 'Where's your daughter, Mr. Fricker?'

'Connie's in her room.' He did not add that, by way of keeping vivid the memory of moral lessons, he had sent her there on Peggy's arrival.

'Do you think she'd give me a cup of tea?'

It was rather early for tea. 'Well, I daresay she would,' smiled Fricker. 'I shall hear what's up afterwards?'

'Yes, I'm sure you will,' promised Peggy.

He sent her under escort to the drawing-room, and directed that Connie should be told to join her. Then he returned to his study and began the letter which he had to write to Trix Trevalla. He fulfilled his obligation loyally, although he had no pity for Trix and was sorely tempted to give her a dig or two. He resisted this temptation when he remembered that to do what he said he would was an essential part of his policy, and that, if he failed in it, Peggy Ryle would come again and want to know the meaning of it; at which thought he raised his brows and smiled in an amused puzzle. So he told Trix that Glowing Stars gave promise of a new development, and, though he could not offer her any price for her shares, he would take them off her hands for a nominal consideration, and hold her free from the liability. 'Thus,' he ended, 'closing all accounts between us.'

'She was a fool, and my wife was a fool, and I suppose I was a fool too,' he mused. A broader view came to his comfort. 'A man's got to be a bit of a fool in some things if he wants to live comfortably at home,' he reflected. He could not expect the weaker sex (such undoubtedly would have been his description) to rise to the pure heights where he dwelt, where success in business was its own reward and the victorious play of brains triumph enough. 'But anyhow we backed the wrong horse in Trix Trevalla,' he had to acknowledge finally.

Before he had sealed the letter, Connie burst into the room. Fricker prepared to say something severe—these unlicensed intrusions were a sore offence. But the sight of his daughter stopped him. She was dressed in the height of smartness; she had her hat on and was buttoning her gloves; her cheeks were red, and excitement shone in her eyes. On the whole it looked as though she were clearing the decks for action.

'I'm going back to tea with Miss Ryle,' she announced.

He rose, and stood with his back to the fireplace.

'Well, she's a very nice friend for you to have, Connie.' There was a flavour of mockery in his tone.

'You know as well as I do that there's no question of that. But Mrs. Trevalla's living with her now.'

'I thought your mother and you had agreed to drop Mrs. Trevalla?'

Connie was not in the mood to notice or to trouble about his subtly malicious sarcasms.

'I asked Beaufort Chance to come here to-day,' she went on, 'and he told me he had to be in the City all the afternoon.'

'Aren't these things in your mother's department, Connie?'

'No, in yours. I want you to back me up. He's going to tea at four o'clock at Miss Ryle's—to meet Mrs. Trevalla.'

'Miss Ryle told you that? And she wants you to go with her?'

'Yes. You see what it means?'

'Why, Connie, you're looking quite dangerous.'

'I'm going with her,' Connie announced, finishing off the last glove-button viciously. 'At least I am if you'll back me up.'

'How?' he asked. He was amused at her in this mood, and rather admired her too.

'Well, first, you must see me through with mamma, if—if anything comes out about what's been happening. You know Beaufort wouldn't stick at giving me away if he wanted to get even with me.'

'You're probably right as to that,' agreed Fricker, licking his cigar.

'So you must tell mamma that it had your approval, and not let her be nasty to me. You can manage that, if you like, you know.'

'I daresay, I daresay. Is there any other diversion for your idle old father?'

'Yes. You must back me up with Beaufort. I believe he's dangling after Mrs. Trevalla again.' Connie's eyes flashed with threatenings of wrath.

'On the quiet?'

Connie nodded emphatically.

'Hardly the square thing,' said Fricker, smiling in an abused patience.

'Are you going to stand it? He's made fierce love to me.'

'Yes, I know something about that, Connie. And you're fond of him, eh?'

'Yes, I am,' she declared defiantly. 'And I won't let that woman take him away from me.'

'What makes you think she'd have him?'

'Oh, she'd have him! But I don't mean her to get the chance.'

Fricker liked spirit of all sorts; if he had approved of Peggy's, he approved of his daughter's too. Moreover his great principle was at stake once more, and must be vindicated again; he must insist on fair play. If what Connie attributed to Beaufort Chance were true, it was by no means fair play. His mind briefly reviewed how he stood towards Beaufort; the answer was that Beaufort hung on him, and could not stand alone. He had the gift of seeing just how people were situated; he saw it better than they did themselves, thanks to his rapid intuition and comprehensive grasp of business affairs. He had set Beaufort Chance on horseback—financial horseback; if he willed, he could pull him down again; at the least he could make his seat most uncomfortable and precarious.

'We should be able to manage him between us, should we, after the event as well as before?'

'You help me to manage him before—I'll manage him myself afterwards,' said Connie.

'Good girl! Say what you like. I'll back you up. Bring him to me, if need be.'

Connie darted at him and kissed him. 'Don't say anything before Miss Ryle,' she whispered. 'It's just that I'm going out to tea.'

When they reached the hall, where Peggy was waiting in triumphant composure, Connie Fricker lived up to the spirit of this caution by discarding entirely her aggressive plainness of speech and her combative air. She minced with excessive gen-

tility as she told Miss Ryle that she was ready to go with her; then she flew off to get a gold-headed parasol. Peggy sat and smiled at Mr. Fricker.

'She's going to have tea with you?' asked Fricker.

'Isn't it kind of her?' beamed Peggy.

Fricker respected diplomacy. 'The kindness is on your side,' he replied politely; but his smile told Peggy all the truth. She gave a laugh of amusement mingled with impatient anticipation.

Connie came running back. 'You'll tell mamma where I've gone, won't you?' she asked, her eyes reminding her father of one-half of his duty. 'Oh, and possibly Mr. Chance will be here at dinner.' She managed to recall the other half.

Fricker nodded; Peggy rose with an admirable unconsciousness.

'Hold your bag tight, Miss Ryle,' Fricker advised, with a gleam in his eye as he shook hands.

'That's all right. I'm well looked after,' said Peggy, as the servant opened the door.

Two hansoms were waiting; in each sat a young man smoking a cigarette. At the sight of Peggy they leapt out; at the sight of the gorgeous young woman who accompanied Peggy they exchanged one swift glance and threw away the cigarettes. Introductions were made, Fricker standing and looking on, the butler peering over Fricker's shoulder.

'What time is it?' inquired Peggy.

'Quarter to four,' said Arty Kane.

'Oh, we must be quick, or—or tea'll be cold!' She turned to Miles Childwick. 'Will you go with Miss Fricker, Miles? Arty, take me. Come along. Good-bye, Mr. Fricker.'

She kissed her hand to Fricker and jumped in; Arty followed. Miles, with a queer look of fright on his face, lifted his hat and indicated the remaining hansom.

'It's rather unconventional, isn't it?' giggled Connie, gathering her skirts carefully away from the wheel.

'Allow me,' begged Miles in a sepulchrally grave tone.

He saw her in without damage, raised his hat again to Fricker, got in, and sat down well on the other side of the cab. He was of opinion that Peggy had let him in shamefully.

'I hope it's a quiet horse, or I shall scream,' said Connie.

'I hope it is,' agreed Miles most heartily. What his part would be if she screamed he dared not think; he said afterwards

that the colours of her garments did quite enough screaming on their own account.

Fricker watched them drive off and then returned to his study thoughtfully. But he was not engrossed in problems of finance, in the possibilities of Glowing Stars and of minimising the claims they would make. He was not even thinking of the odd way things had turned out in regard to Trix Trevalla, nor of how he had pledged himself to deal with Beaufort Chance. The only overt outcome of his meditations was the remark, addressed once again to his study walls:—

'I'm not sure that Connie isn't a bit too lively in her dress.'

The various influences which produced this illuminating doubt it would be tedious to consider. And the doubt had no practical result. He did not venture so much as to mention it to Connie or to Mrs. Fricker.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE WHIP ON THE PEG.

Of that drive with Connie Fricker Miles Childwick had, in the after-time, many tales to tell. Truth might claim the inspiration, an artistic intellect perfected them. 'She said things to which no gentleman should listen in a hansom cab, but the things she said were nothing to the things she looked as if she was going to say. In a hansom! No screen between you and a scrutinising public, Mrs. John!' That was the first stage. In the second he had invented for poor Connie all the sayings which he declared her expression to suggest. Whatever the exact facts, while he forgave Peggy Ryle everything else, he did not cease to harbour malice on account of that ride. Connie thought him nice but rather slow. His must be the blame, since it is agreed that in such cases the man should adapt himself.

The work of the bodyguard was done; it was disbanded with a gracious invitation to supper. Peggy flew up the stairs ahead of her guest. There was a great question to be solved.

'The gentleman has come, miss,' said the charwoman.

'And Mrs. Trevalla?'

'I told him Mrs. Trevalla would be in directly.'

'And where is she?'

'She's still in her room, I think, miss.'

Peggy turned triumphant eyes on her companion. 'Now then, Miss Fricker!' said she. 'That's the door! I shall go and keep Trix quiet. That's the door!' She pointed encouragingly, if rather imperiously, to the sitting-room.

'I'm not afraid,' laughed Connie, putting her hat straight and giving a rattle to her bangles. But there was a ring of agitation in her voice, and in her heart she half-regretted the dismissal of the bodyguard. Still, she had pluck.

She swept in with the sustaining consciousness of a highly dramatic entrance. To come in well is often half the battle.

'You here! The devil!' exclaimed Beaufort Chance.

'Mr. Chance! Well, I declare!' said Connie. 'And alone too!' She looked round suspiciously, as though Trix might perhaps be under the table. 'Well, I suppose Miss Ryle won't be long taking off her things.'

Beaufort already suspected a plot, but, his first surprise over, he would not plead guilty to being an object that invited one.

'I got away earlier than I expected,' he told her, 'and looked in here on my way to Cadogan Square. There was no chance of finding you at home so early.'

'And there was a chance of finding Mrs. Trevalla?' She sat down opposite him, showing her teeth in a mocking smile. His confusion and the weakness of his plea set her courage firmly on its feet.

'I don't know whether there was or not. She's not here, you see.'

'Oh, I'll amuse you till she comes!'

'I shan't wait for her long.'

'I shan't stay long either. You can drive me back home, can't you?'

He was pitifully caught, and had not the adroitness to hide his sense of it. Perhaps he had been cruelly used. When he had written to Trix, saying he meant to come again and asking for a date, it was hardly fair of Peggy, performing the office of amanuensis for Trix, to say that Mrs. Trevalla saw few visitors, but that this particular day (on which Peggy was to visit Fricker) would be the best chance of seeing her. Such language might be non-committal; it was undoubtedly misleading. He had found in it a sign that Trix was yielding, coming to a sensible frame of mind, recognising what seemed to him so obvious—the power he had over her and her attraction towards him. In his

heart he believed that he held both these women, Trix and Connie, in his hand, and could do as he liked with them; thus he would cajole and conciliate Connie (he thought kisses would not lose their efficacy, nor that despotic air either) while he made Trix his own—for towards her lay his stronger inclination. To secure her would be his victory over all the sneerers, over Mervyn, and—the greatest came last—over herself. But, however clever we are, there is a point at which things may fall out too perversely. If Connie came by chance, this acme of bad luck was reached; if by design, then he had miscalculated somewhere.

'You're not greeting me very enthusiastically,' remarked Connie. 'You don't sit stock-still and say you won't stay long when I come to you in the drawing-room at home!'

'Nonsense! That girl may be in here any minute.'

'Well, and mamma might come in any minute at home—which would be much worse. After all, what would she matter? You're not ashamed of me, I suppose?'

Assumption is a valuable device in argument; Connie was using it skilfully. She assumed that she was first in his thoughts, and did not charge him with preferring another; let him explain that—if he dared.

'Nonsense!' he repeated fretfully. 'But I can't play the fool now. I've come to see Mrs. Trevalla on business. Isn't there another room?'

'No; and I thought papa did all the business there was with Mrs. Trevalla.'

He had sat down near the table; she came and perched herself on it. Intimidation must probably be the main weapon, but she was alive to the importance of reinforcing it.

'He thinks he does,' she went on significantly.

'Oh, it's a small matter. It won't do him any harm. And I'm a free agent, I suppose?'

'You're free enough, anyhow, pretty often,' Connie admitted.

'You've never objected,' he snarled, his temper getting out of hand.

'Well, no. I knew I had to do with a gentleman.'

Kisses might be out of place, even dangerous in view of a possible interruption; but there was the despotic air. Now seemed the minute for it.

'Don't you talk nonsense, child,' he said. 'If I've treated

you kindly, it doesn't entitle you to take that tone. And get off that table.'

'I'm very comfortable here,' remarked Connie.

'It doesn't look respectable.'

'What, not with you and me? There's nobody here, is there?'

'Stop playing the fool,' he commanded brusquely. 'What's the matter with you to-day?'

'I'm in ripping spirits to-day, Beaufort. Can't you guess why?'

'I don't believe you came here to see Peggy Ryle at all,' he broke out.

'Never mind why I came here.'

'Have you got an idea that you've done something clever?'

'Never mind. I've awfully good news, Beaufort.'

'They may be listening at the door.' His uneasiness was pitiful.

'It wouldn't matter. Everybody'll know soon,' said Connie consolingly.

'What the deuce are you talking about?' he growled.

She bent forward towards him with a striking, if rather overdone, air of joyous confusion.

'I've spoken to papa, Beaufort,' she whispered.

Startled out of pretence, he sprang to his feet with an oath. His look was very ugly, he glared threateningly. Connie braced her courage and did not quail.

'I know I ought to have asked you,' she admitted with a smile that belied her professed penitence, 'but I caught him in such a beautiful humour that I had to take advantage of it. So I told him everything. I just confessed everything, Beaufort! Of course he scolded me—it hasn't been quite right, has it?—but he was very kind. He said that, since we were engaged, he'd forgive me and make mamma forgive me too.' She paused before her climax. 'I think that he's really simply awfully pleased.'

'You've told your father that you're engaged to me? You know it's a damned lie.'

Connie's eyes gleamed dangerously, but she kept admirably cool.

'Well, I told him that you'd said you loved me, and that you always kissed me when we were alone, and called me your little Connie, and so on, you know. And papa said that he presumed from all that that we were engaged.'

'Well?' he muttered savagely.

'And I said that of course I presumed so too.'

It was spoken with the innocence of the dove, but it put Beaufort Chance in a very awkward position; the reference is not to his sensibilities but to his tactics. Connie's dexterity forced him to a broad alternative—submission or open war. She deprived him of any half-way house, any compromise by which cajolery and kisses would serve in place of a promise and an obligation. She did not leave the matter there; she jumped down from the table and put her arm on his shoulder—indeed half-way round his neck. 'You must have meant me to; and it made me so happy to—to feel that I was yours, Beaufort.'

To this pass his shifty dealings had brought him, even as in public affairs they had forbidden him a career, and in business had condemned him to a sort of outlawry, although an outlawry tempered by riches. He was in an extremity; his chance of Trix was at stake, his dominion over Connie herself was challenged. He saw the broad alternative, and he chose open war.

'It's all a very pretty trick of yours, my dear,' he sneered, throwing her arm off him none too gently; 'but a man doesn't marry every girl he kisses, especially not when she's so ready to be kissed as some people we know. You can explain it to your father any way you like, but you're not going to bluff me.'

'I see why you came here now,' said Connie coolly. 'You came to make love to Trix Trevalla. Well, you can't, that's all.'

'That's for Mrs. Trevalla to say, not for you.'

'I don't expect Mrs. Trevalla'll show up at all,' remarked Connie, leaning against the table again.

'That's the little plan, is it?' He gave a jerk of his head. 'By Jove, I see! That hussy of a Ryle girl's in it!'

'I don't know who's in it; you seem rather out of it,' smiled Connie.

'I am, am I? We'll see. So Mrs. Trevalla won't show, won't she? That's hardly final, is it? She's on the premises, I rather fancy.'

'Going to force your way into her bedroom? Oh, Beaufort!'

'You'd be mightily shocked, wouldn't you?' He moved towards the door; his purpose was only half-formed, but he wished her to think it was absolute.

'I don't mind, but I'm sure papa and mamma would. I don't think they'd like you for a son-in-law after that.'

'Then we should all be pleased.'

'Or perhaps for a partner either.'

He turned round sharply, and came back a step or two towards her.

'What do you mean by that?' he asked slowly.

'I don't suppose papa would care to have anything to do with a man who trifled with his daughter's affections.' Connie stuck loyally to the old phrases.

He was full in front of her now and looking hard at her.

'You little devil! I believe you've squared him,' said he.

Connie, well on the table again, put her arms akimbo, stuck her legs out in front of her straight from the knee, and laughed in his face.

'If you're going into Mrs. Trevalla's room, you might ask her if, from her experience, she thinks it wise to quarrel with papa.'

'I'm not a woman and a fool.'

'Oh, you know your own business best, Beaufort!'

It was sorely against the grain, but he shirked his open war; he tried coaxing.

'Come, be reasonable, Connie. You're a sensible girl. I mean all that's square, but——'

'I mean that if you wait here after I've gone, or go now and see Trix Trevalla, I'll never speak to you again. And papa—— Well, as I say, you know your own business best about that.'

Her cool certainty, her concentration on one purpose, gave her all the advantage over him with his divided counsels, his inconsistent desires, his efforts to hedge. Again she pinned him to a choice.

'What do you want?' he asked curtly.

'I want you to take me home to Cadogan Square.' That was hard and business-like, and bore for him all the significance that she meant to put into it. Then her voice grew lower and her large eyes turned on him with a different expression. 'We can have a really friendly talk about it there.' She meant to beat him, but she was highly content to soften the submission by all means in her power. She would not hesitate about begging his forgiveness, provided the spoils of victory were hers—in the fashion of some turbulent vassal after defying his feeble overlord.

Beaufort read it all well enough. He saw that she liked him and was ready to be pleasant: his dream of mastery vanished

from before his eyes. He might have broken Trix Trevalla's proud but sensitive spirit; Miss Connie's pliant pride and unpliant purposes were quite different things to deal with. He knew that in effect, whatever the forms were, he submitted if he took her to Cadogan Square. Henceforward his lot was with the Frickers—and not as their master either.

The truth came home to him with cutting bitterness. He had been able to say to himself that he might use Fricker, but that he was very different from Fricker, that he flirted with Connie, but that his wife would have to be very different from her. He had to give up, too, all thought of Trix Trevalla. Or he must face the alternative and be at war with Fricker. Had he the courage? Had he the strength? He stood looking gloomily at Connie.

'You're a fool, Beaufort,' she told him plainly, with a glittering smile. 'I'm sure you seemed fond enough of me. Why shouldn't we be very jolly? You think I'm nasty now, but I'm not generally, am I?' She coaxed him with the look that she would have said was her most 'fetching.' To do her justice, a more expressive word for the particular variety of glance is hard to find.

At this moment Peggy Ryle came out of Trix's room (where she had beguiled the time in idle conversation), shut the door carefully behind her, crossed the passage, and entered the sitting-room. The time Connie had estimated as sufficient for the interview had elapsed.

'Oh, Mr. Chance, I'm sorry! Trix has such a headache that she can't come in. She has tried, but standing up or moving——' Peggy threw out her hands in an expressive gesture. 'That's what kept me,' she added apologetically to Connie. 'I hope you've amused one another all this time?'

The plot was plain now; the bulk of Beaufort's resentment turned on Peggy. What was the use of that? Peggy had no fear of him. She was radiantly invulnerable.

'I'm sorry she's so seedy.' He hesitated; he longed to see Trix, even if it were no more than to see her and to give her a parting blow. 'Perhaps you'll let me send a note in, to say what my business is? It's pressing, and she might make an effort to see me for——'

'I'm afraid I must go,' Connie interrupted. 'I promised to be home.'

'Must you really? I suppose the cab's waiting.'

'You mustn't bother poor Mrs. Trevalla with business now, must he, Miss Ryle? It must wait for another day. You were coming to Cadogan Square, weren't you? I'll take you with me.'

He looked from one to the other. Never was man in a more hopeless corner. Nothing would have pleased him so much as to knock their heads together. Connie was imitating Peggy's external unconsciousness of anything remarkable in the situation as well as she could.

'We mustn't stay. Mrs. Trevalla must want you,' pursued Connie.

'Oh, I can leave her for just a few minutes,' Peggy assured her, with an anxious look at the clock.

'Good-bye, Miss Ryle,' said Connie, giving Peggy's hand a hearty squeeze. She passed on towards the door and opened it. Holding it ajar, she looked round and waited for Beaufort Chance. For an instant he stood where he was. The idea of rebellion was still in him. But his spirit failed. He came up to Peggy and sullenly bade her farewell.

'Good-bye,' said Peggy in a low voice. Its tone struck him as odd; when he looked in her eyes he saw a touch of compassion. It flashed across him that she understood what he was feeling, that she saw how his acts had brought him lower than his nature need have been brought—or at least that she was sorry that this fate, and nothing less than this, must be held to be justice.

'Good-bye, Miss Ryle. My regrets to Mrs. Trevalla. I hope for another opportunity. Now I'm ready, Miss Fricker, and most delighted to have the chance.'

At all times let the proprieties be sacred!

That is, let them be observed in the presence of third parties—especially if those parties have brought us to humiliation. They are not so exacting in a vehicle that holds only two.

'Your turn to-day, mine some other day, Connie,' said Beaufort Chance, as he sullenly settled himself in the cab.

'Oh, don't talk bosh, and don't sulk. You've found out that I'm not a fool. Is there any harm in that?' She turned to him briskly. 'There are just two ways of taking this,' she told him. 'One is to be bullied into it by papa. The other is to do it pleasantly. Since there's no way not to do it, which of those two do you think best?'

'Did you mean it all the time?' he asked, sullen still, but curious.

'As soon as I began to be really gone on you,' she answered him. The phrase is not classical, but she used it, and used it with a very clear purpose. 'You don't suppose I like being—being disagreeable, and seeming to have—to have to force you to what you'd always let me understand you wanted? A girl has some self-respect, Beaufort.'

'Some girls have got a deuced good set of brains anyhow,' he said, feeling for her some of the admiration that her father's clear purposes and resolute pursuit of them always claimed for him.

'Do you suppose (Connie's face looked out of the other side of the cab) that if I hadn't been awfully fond of you—— ?'

He believed her, which was not strange; what she said was near enough to the truth to be rather strange. Yet it was not incongruous in her. And she seized a good moment for confessing it. If he would choose the pleasant way of accepting the inevitable, it should be made very pleasant to him. Nor was she indifferent as to which way he chose. She had her father in reserve, and would invoke his help if need be; but she hated to think of his smile while he gave it. Suddenly, under the board of the cab, she put her hand into Beaufort Chance's and gave his a squeeze.

He surrendered; but he kept up a little bit of pretence to the last. Connie let him keep it up, and humoured him in it.

'All right. But I'll tell you what I think of your little game when we're alone together!'

'Oh, I say, you frighten me!' cried Connie tactfully. 'You won't be cruel, will you, Beaufort dear?'

She would have made an excellent Mayor of the Palace to a blustering but easily managed king.

He had chosen the pleasant way, and verily all things were made pleasant to him. Mrs. Fricker was archly maternal. A mother's greeting for him, an indulgent mother's forgiveness for Connie's secrecy. No more than a ponderously playful 'Naughty child!' redeemed in an instant by 'But we could always trust her!' Not thus always Mrs. Fricker towards Connie and her diversions, as Connie's anxiety in the past well testified. But there, an engagement in the end does make a difference—if it is a desirable one. It would seem dangerous to divorce morality and prudence, since the apostles of each have ever been supremely

anxious to prove that it coincided with, if it did not even include, the other; let us hope that they seek rather to excuse their opponents than to fortify themselves.

Fricker too was benevolent; he hinted at millions; he gave Beaufort to understand that while a partner or associate was one thing, a member of the family would be quite another; crumbs from the rich man's table compared with 'All that I have is thine' was about the difference. It is true that Fricker smiled here and there, and just at first had seemed to telegraph something to his daughter's wide-awake eyes, and to receive a reply that increased his cordiality. What of that? Who cares for a whip if it be left hanging on the peg? It is at worst a hint which any wise and well-bred slave will notice but ignore. Not a reminder of it came from Fricker, unless in a certain far-away reflectiveness of smile. He had spent an hour that day in the task of finding out how entirely he held Beaufort in the hollow of his hand. The time was not wasted—besides, it was a recreation. But he did not wish to have to shut his fist and squeeze; he preferred at all times that things should go pleasantly, and his favourite moral lessons be inculcated by the mild uses of persuasion. 'Now you're one of us,' he told Beaufort, grasping his hand. Well, possibly he glanced at the whip out of the corner of his eye when he was saying that.

And Connie herself? She was the finest diplomatist of the three, for her heart was in the work. So much falsehood comes from no cause as from labelling human folk with a single ticket; a bundle of them might have been adequate to Connie. The time came which Beaufort had threatened—when they were alone as an affianced pair. The thing was done; she had spared no roughness in doing it. Now she set herself to make him content; nor did she force him to retract his threats. Her own mind was divided as to their relations. When it came to the point of a clash of wills (to use a phrase consecrated by criticism), she found always that she wished her's to prevail; in lighter questions she was primitive enough to cherish the ideal of herself as a willing slave. If Beaufort had not been able to raise that illusion in her from time to time, she would not have liked him so much, nor gone to such lengths to prove her own ultimate mastery. Almost persuading herself, she almost persuaded him; and in this effort she became pleasant to him again. Thus she compromised between her woman's temperament and her masculine will. If he would accept

the compromise as a permanent basis, their union promised to go very smoothly.

'If you'd been like this,' he told her, 'there wouldn't have been any trouble this afternoon.'

She endorsed the monstrous falsehood readily.

'No, it was all my fault. But I was—so terrified of losing you.'

'You tried to threaten me into it!'

He could not be so deluded as to doubt what she had done. But he wanted the forlorn comfort of a brave face over a beaten heart.

'You threatened me too,' whispered Connie.

She broke away from him and took up her old jaunty attitude —arm on the mantelpiece, foot on the fender again: there was challenge in the eyes that met his boldly.

'You did want some persuading,' she reminded him.

He laughed. 'Well, Trix Trevalla's a devilish pretty woman —and a bit easier to hold than you.'

'I'm easy enough, if your hand's light. As for her, she'd have worried you to death. She'd have hated you, Beaufort.'

He did not like that, and showed it.

'And I—don't!' Connie went on with a dazzling smile. 'Well, you're staring at me. How do I look?'

So she played her fish, with just enough hint of her power, with just enough submission to the legitimate sway she invited him to exercise. It was all very dexterous; there was probably no other road to her end. If it seems in some ways not attractive—well, we must use the weapons we have or be content to go to the wall. When she bade him good-night—still Mrs. Fricker was strong on reputable hours, and Connie herself assumed a new touch of scrupulousness (she was a free lance no more)—his embrace did not lack ardour. She disengaged herself from his arms with a victorious laugh.

Her mother waited for her, vigilant but approving—just a little anxious too.

'Well, Connie, is he very happy?'

'It's all right, mamma.' Her assurance was jovially impudent. 'I can do just what I like with him!'

'You'll have a job sometimes,' opined Mrs. Fricker.

'That's half the fun.' She thought a moment, and then spoke with a startling candour—with an unceremoniousness which Mrs. Fricker would have reproved twenty-four hours earlier. 'I'm very fond of him,' she said, 'but Beaufort's a funk in the end, you

know.' She swung herself off to bed, singing a song. Her title to triumph is not to be denied. Peggy Ryle had furnished the opportunity, but the use of it had been all her own. A natural exultation may excuse the exclamation with which she jumped into bed:—

'I knew Mrs. Trevalla wouldn't be in it if I got a fair show!'

Beaufort Chance stayed a while alone in the drawing-room before he went down to join Fricker over a cigar. He had enjoyed Connie's company that night; the truth stood out undeniable. She had made him forget what her company meant and would cost—nay more, what it would bring him in worldly gain. She had made him forget, or cease to wish for, Trix Trevalla. She had banished the thought of what he had been and once had hoped to be. If she could do that for him, would he be unhappy? For a moment he almost prayed to be always unhappy in the thing which he was now set to do. For after an hour of blindness there came, as often, an hour of illumination almost unnatural. In the light of it he saw one of the worst things that a man can see. Enough of his old self and of his old traditions remained to make his eyes capable of the vision. He knew that the worst in him had been pleased; he saw that to please the worst in him threatened now to become enough. His record was not very good, but had he deserved this? It is useless to impugn the way of things. The knowledge came to him that, as he had more and more sought the low and not the high, so more and more the low had become sufficient to him. The knowledge was very bitter; but with a startled horror he anticipated the time when he would lose it. He had lost so much—public honour, private scruples, delicacy of taste. He had set out with at least a respect for these things and with that share in them which the manner of his life and the standard of his associates imparted to him. They were all gone. He was degraded. He knew that now, and he feared that even the consciousness of it would soon die.

There was no help for it. In such cases there is none, unless a man will forsake all and go naked into the wilderness. To such a violent remedy he was unequal. It did not need Fricker's smooth assumption that all was settled to tell him that all was settled indeed. It did not need Fricker's welcome to the bosom of the family to tell him that of that family he would now be. Fricker's eulogy of his daughter was unnecessary, since soon to Beaufort too she would seem a meet subject for unstinted praise.

Yet Fricker did not lack some insight into his thoughts.

'I daresay, old fellow,' he remarked, warming his back before the fire—which he liked at nights, whatever the season of the year—'that this isn't quite what you expected when you began life, but, depend upon it, it's very good business. After all, we very few of us get what we think we shall when we set up in the thing. Here am I—and, by Jove, I started life secretary to a Diocesan Benevolent Fund, and wanting to marry the Archdeacon's daughter! Here are you—well, we know all about you, Beaufort, my boy! Old Mervyn hasn't quite done the course he set out to do. Where's our friend Mrs. Trevalla? What's going to happen to pretty Peggy Ryle?' He dropped his coat-tails and shrugged his shoulders. 'Between you and me, and not for the ladies, we take what we can get and try to be thankful. It's a queer business, but you haven't drawn such a bad ticket after all.'

Beaufort Chance took a long pull of whisky-and-soda. The last idea of violent rebellion was gone. Under the easy tones, the comfortably pessimistic doctrine (there is much and peculiar comfort in doctrine of that colour), proceeding from the suave and well-warmed preacher on the hearthrug, there lay a polite intimation of the inevitable. If Fate and the Frickers seemed to mingle and become indistinct in conception, why, so they did in fact. Whose was the whip on the peg—Fate's or Fricker's? And who gives either Fate or Frickers power? Whatever the answer to these questions, Beaufort Chance had no mind that the whip should be taken down.

'I've nothing to complain of,' said he, and drank again.

Fricker watched the gulps with a fatherly smile.

(To be continued.)

AN ADVENTURE IN SAINT VINCENT.

BY SIR WILLIAM LAIRD CLOWES.

TOWARDS the end of 1795, Victor Hugues, who, as Commissary of the Convention and Governor of Guadeloupe, made desperate efforts to rehabilitate the declining influence of France in the West Indies, was bent upon the conquest of the island of Saint Vincent. All his regular forces, however, were fully engaged elsewhere. He was able to depend only upon the native Caribs, who occupied the greater part of the island, and, with few exceptions, were in a state of disaffection, if not of open revolt against the British, and upon a motley crowd of ill-disciplined adventurers whom he collected with difficulty, and who, when at length they were disembarked on the island, were defeated with comparative ease. It is true that several months later he was a little more successful, though he was able to hold part of the island only for a very brief period; but I am concerned now with his first, and not with his second effort. Hugues's first effort landed Monsieur Moreau de Jonnès [1] in one of the most astonishing and romantic adventures of the latter's exciting career.

Moreau de Jonnès had already acquired some knowledge of Saint Vincent, having lived there with the Caribs for several weeks, and having attached to himself a chief named Pakiri. This chief had a daughter, Eliama, whom de Jonnès, who was only eighteen when he knew her, describes as a miracle at once of beauty, of intelligence, and of heroism. She had received her education at a convent at Saint Pierre, Martinique, and was in consequence a determined enemy of the British. She also was eighteen in 1795.

The two young people made one another's acquaintance under dramatic conditions. De Jonnès, with a commission from Victor Hugues as a lieutenant in the Artillerie de la Marine, was at Saint Vincent in charge of a dozen French artillerymen and a couple of small guns, his mission being to organise, arm, and drill the Caribs, and to reconnoitre and report concerning the positions held by the British garrison, the headquarters of which were at Kingstown. De Jonnès was Pakiri's honoured guest; but Eliama was absent from the island, having gone to Martinique to nurse a

[1] See the CORNHILL MAGAZINE for July, 1902, p. 38.

friend who had been bitten by a snake. Monsieur Léon Say, who knew de Jonnès, and who has commented upon the adventure which I narrate, does not appear to entertain the slightest doubt as to the truth of any part of it. For reasons which I shall presently set forth, I have no doubt whatsoever as to the falsity of certain details; but I ought to explain at once that in saying this I do not necessarily attack the good faith of de Jonnès. The assertions which I am able to controvert purport to be nothing more than reproductions of statements made to him. He does not put them forward on his own authority; and I am bound to admit that I cannot disprove any part of the present story that pretends to be the record of the writer's own knowledge and experience. De Jonnès, however, on this as well as on other occasions, shows an ungenerous readiness to believe any and every evil concerning the British; and I cannot acquit him of having accepted and disseminated an abominable libel which very little inquiry and research would have shown him was absolutely baseless.

On September 4, 1795, a hurricane, accompanied by earthquakes and volcanic rumblings, burst over Saint Vincent. De Jonnès and some of his Carib friends were on the west side of the island, and were watching the sea. Suddenly they caught sight of a large vessel which looked like a frigate, and which was evidently endeavouring to weather the north point of the island. They supposed that she was trying to get round to Kingstown, probably with the object of carrying supplies to the British garrison there. It looked as if she might be successful, when without apparent reason she swung round to windward, was taken aback, and broached to, her masts coming down instantly. She was but two cables from the rocks at the time, and within a few seconds she drove ashore and struck violently, the huge seas sweeping her decks, and presently lifting her up and dashing her down again with such force that the bottom must have been knocked out of her almost immediately.

The onlookers were clinging to the rocks and the low shrubs, and, the air being full of flying objects, they were themselves in some danger. Nor could they distinguish much. But just before the fall of the masts de Jonnès had imagined that he saw two dark figures in the mizen shrouds. He then lost sight of them altogether. A moment later, however, an artilleryman who was more favourably situated discovered two black heads rising and falling amid the waves, and pointed them out to Pakiri, who

instantly recognised one of them as being that of his daughter, whom he supposed to be still in Martinique. All the Caribs swam like seals. The old chief leapt into the boiling water to save the girl or to perish with her, and, after a terrible struggle, succeeded in steering her round the end of a projecting point, under the lee of which there was some small amount of shelter. Thither the natives rushed to assist, and at length Pakiri and Eliama were enabled to reach the shore. Eliama's story, as told on the following day, and as repeated by de Jonnès, was as follows:

She had left Martinique in a native canoe, accompanied by a single Carib attendant. In the channel between Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent, the little craft had been sighted by a British frigate, the *Laurier*, which had chased and overhauled the canoe, and ordered its occupants to come on board. On reaching the deck, Eliama had ascertained that the vessel was commanded by 'Lord Seymour,' and had been told that he desired to see her in his cabin. She had declined to go thither, whereupon the captain had come out and attempted to drag her in. She had resisted, and had struck the captain in the face, drawing blood, and knocking him across a gun. Rising, he had again approached her in a threatening manner, and had only desisted upon finding that the girl had provided herself with one of the poisoned arrows which are still used by the Caribs of the mainland, and that she was prepared to use it. She had then been allowed to retire to a place on the poop, where she had crouched on deck after the manner of the Caribs. The captain, upon being summoned in consequence of the dangerous situation of his ship when the hurricane burst upon her, had found the girl there, and had kicked her as he passed. This last outrage had decided her, and, awaiting the critical moment, she had seized an axe and severed the tiller-rope, which seems to have been exposed. She had thus brought about the loss of the frigate and of the greater part of her crew, including the brutal captain. The rest, upon gaining the shore, would have been murdered by the Caribs had not de Jonnès informed the savages that Victor Hugues would make a handsome return in spirits or gunpowder for every prisoner delivered alive to him. Three days later the survivors were sent to Guadeloupe.

Now for the refutation of this disgraceful tale. I cannot go so far as to say that no British vessel of any kind was wrecked on the shores of Saint Vincent in September, 1795. A merchant

vessel of some sort may have been, but certainly not a frigate, nor any regular British man-of-war, large or small. The records are all perfect. Nor was there then in the British navy any ship named the *Laurier*. Even supposing *Laurier* to be de Jonnès's version of the British ship-name *Laurel*, we are equally at fault. There was no British man-of-war so called in the West Indies that year. Of British naval officers bearing the illustrious name of Seymour, and of rank sufficient to entitle them to command a frigate, even temporarily, there were in 1795 three only, if I except one, Phineas Seymour, who, being then seventy-six years of age, had retired from active service, though he lived till 1803. These three were Lord Hugh Seymour, better known during his early life as the Hon. Hugh Seymour Conway; Michael Seymour, the elder of that name; and Stephen Seymour. Lord Hugh had been promoted to the rank of rear-admiral three months before the date assigned to the alleged loss of the *Laurier*, and was then in the Channel Fleet. Michael Seymour, who had been only three weeks a commander, and who was not regularly eligible for a post-ship like a frigate, commanded the *Racehorse*, a sloop; and he was not in the West Indies. Stephen Seymour, who likewise was not regularly qualified for a post-ship, yet who might conceivably have commanded one in an acting capacity, was elsewhere, and was lost in June, 1796, in the *Arab* off the coast of France. If, therefore, no *Laurier* or *Laurel*, nor any other British frigate was lost off Saint Vincent in 1795, and if no British naval commander named Seymour commanded a vessel named *Laurier* or *Laurel*, nor lost his life in 1795, we may, I think, conclude that the story of the ill-treatment of Eliama by a British officer rests on very flimsy foundations indeed.

The truth of the narrative of the subsequent adventures of de Jonnès in Saint Vincent is, I hope, less questionable. The Frenchman spent the following three months with the Caribs, and devoted part of that time to training them, and part to making a military map of the island, or rather of the northern part of it. Eighteenth-century maps divide the island into two portions by means of a line running from near Black Point, on the east, to the mouth of the Willibou, on the west. The district south of this line, including the modern townships of Kingstown, Château Belair, and Calliaqua, was, in 1795, British; the district to the north, including the Soufrière and Morne Caru peaks, and the modern Georgetown, is marked as 'Caribs' Land,' and was occu-

pied almost exclusively by the natives, most of whom had French sympathies. The mountainous frontier was well guarded on the Carib side, not only by watchmen, but also by a number of trained dogs, somewhat like greyhounds, of Spanish breed and of savage habits. Eliama could manage these animals without difficulty, but de Jonnès never felt safe with them, and seems to have been in permanent terror lest they should mistake him for an Englishman. No doubt the British, on their side, took their precautions also.

The delay in the arrival of forces from Guadeloupe permitted the English garrison at the south end of the island to perfect its defences. Kingstown was covered by an entrenched camp, and further protected by means of fortified lines connected with the citadel, which was an old house, dominated, it is true, by neighbouring hills, but, owing to the height and strength of its walls, safe from any *coup de main*. At last Hugues sent over a battalion of infantry, and at the same time a dozen privateers disembarked part of their crews to assist in the forthcoming attack; but de Jonnès remarked with misgiving that the so-called soldiers consisted largely of military offenders from the colonial depôts, seamen who had deserted their ships, negroes, wild Caribs, and even armed women and girls. The wild natives, he says bitterly, were, nevertheless, the best disciplined people in that scratch army, and the least inclined of any to pillage, incendiarism, and devastation. They were more obedient than the soldiers, less ferocious than the negroes, and not so drunken as the seamen.

It was arranged that the army, such as it was, should move round by the coast, and that de Jonnès, with his handful of artillerymen, his two guns, and a body of friendly Saint Vincent Caribs, should march across the mountains direct, so as to turn the British position, and post the pieces advantageously on the high ground behind the town. The first part of the scheme succeeded capitally. De Jonnès crossed the forest-clad hills, meeting with but little resistance, descended towards the coast, took up his assigned position and opened fire at short range upon the entrenched camp; while the other column, which had arrived by way of the coast, stormed the British outworks over the fascines with which the Caribs had half filled the ditches. Indeed, all the works had been taken, if we may trust the account, and most of their defenders cut to pieces, and the invaders had

it open to them to enter the citadel and the town with the flying remnant of the British, when indiscipline turned what had been an incipient victory into an utter defeat. The people got out of hand, and halted to indulge in pillage and to raid a rum factory. More than half the army was presently drunk, hundreds of men lying about perfectly incapable of movement; and not until the factory and its contents had been burnt was it found possible to arrest the evil. Thus the actual occupation of the town was delayed, nor could it afterwards be effected. A British corvette lying in the port had put to sea at the beginning of the attack, and, after her departure, the privateer vessels from Guadeloupe had anchored there. In the early morning of the next day, just as the French were about to advance again, the corvette returned. The privateer captains on shore with the army saw their vessels endangered, and remembered that they had but few people on board. There was, therefore, a general rush of the privateersmen back to their ships. The result was a panic. De Jonnès says that if only the British had made a sortie at that moment they might have carried all before them. To cover the withdrawal which became necessary the houses in the suburbs were set fire to, and, sheltered by the flames and smoke, the rest of the coast column retired.

In the meantime de Jonnès, as he fondly supposed, had been doing exceedingly well with his two guns, which he had moved on to the crest of a narrow and lofty spur jutting out from the mountainous mass in the centre of the island. But the spectacle of the sack of the rum factory had been too much for the majority of his people, and the Caribs among them had at length joined their comrades below, leaving only the few French artillerymen above with their lieutenant. When the retreat began, and still more, when the British began to follow it up and to harass its rear, de Jonnès saw that the time had come for him to look to his own safety, unless he preferred to be cut off and taken. He began therefore to withdraw towards the mountain heights, but was soon obliged to abandon one of his guns, which he threw over a precipice.

While he was engaged in this task, he was accosted by another young Carib girl whose acquaintance he had made, and who, armed like a man, sprang down to him with the news that his retreat had been cut off by a body of negroes in the British service. In fact, even as she spoke, some of the enemy showed

themselves. Not an instant was to be lost. The girl seized de Jonnès by the arm, and flung both him and herself from the edge of a cliff on which both happened to be standing. The two fugitives crashed down together through the thick vegetation which covered the slope, and, while the bullets of the negroes whistled over them, plunged deeper and deeper into the overgrown but nearly precipitous gulf below them. De Jonnès believes that in this mad succession of leaps, struggles, and rushes, they descended in a few minutes more than six hundred feet. Creepers and other thickly matted plants broke their numerous falls and saved them from serious damage, and at length they tumbled out upon a level spot, breathless, but, save for pricks and scratches, unhurt.

The young lieutenant's deliverer was one Illehuë-Arabou, or Flower of the Woods, a granddaughter of a reputed sorceress, from whose clutches de Jonnès some time before had saved a British officer, one Captain Dawson.

The two found themselves in a deep and narrow ravine. It was dry, but there were ample signs that, after rainfall on the higher ground, it became, at least for a brief period, the bed of a roaring torrent. While they were debating what next to do, they were suddenly threatened with a new danger. The negroes from whom they had just escaped did not attempt to follow them down the almost perpendicular declivity, but, unfortunately, another body of negroes appeared on the other side of the ravine, which was somewhat less steep. The first body hailed the second, bidding it to look out for the fugitives below; and the second, having found a path, began to scramble down. De Jonnès and his companion feared to descend the bed of the ravine lest they should fall into the hands of the British, who were again masters of the coast to the south of the island; and they feared equally to ascend it lest they should find themselves unable to escape at the upper end of it. Nor could they hope to make any effectual resistance to the twenty or thirty well-armed negroes who were upon their tracks. The pursuers, sure of their quarry, were already shouting news of their success to their comrades above.

It was then that Illehuë-Arabou bethought herself of the proximity of the mouth of a wonderful cavern, of which she knew something. This cavern, according to de Jonnès, was in reality the lower part of a deep and gigantic fissure which ran through the mass of the mountainous centre of the island. While

marching southward with his guns he had crossed the top of this fissure, which was there no broader than an ordinary field ditch, though he had been told by the Caribs that a two hundred fathom line would not reach its bottom. It was also said to run for at least a league and a half through the rock. The natives were obviously superstitious concerning it, and when Flower of the Woods spoke of it she displayed extreme reluctance to enter it, declaring that no one who had gone in thither had ever come out again. The danger, however, was pressing, and the fugitives, taking refuge in the dark mouth of the mysterious opening, posted themselves, musket in hand, so as to command the passage. They had not long to wait, for the negroes, though they hesitated to invade the cavern, soon showed themselves at the orifice, and began to fire at hazard into the gloom, where they did no damage. De Jonnès and Flower of the Woods, on the other hand, were thus provided by their enemies with excellent targets, and succeeded in shooting one or two of the assailants, the rest of whom drew off with shouts of savage rage. They remained outside but under shelter, and seemed to be concerting plans of attack until it began to grow dark. De Jonnès quickly realised that although his position gave him an immense advantage so long as daylight lasted, it would put him at a disadvantage at night, when his foes, superior in number, would be able to approach him without being seen. Indeed, night had scarcely come on ere Flower of the Woods, who had been recounting in a whisper some of the eerie legends connected with the place, interrupted herself, and struck out suddenly and vigorously with an axe which she had in her hand. She had seen the glitter of a human eye, and a piercing yell, followed by the fall of a heavy body, showed that she had struck none too soon.

It was clearly time to move from the vestibule of the cave, and to seek safety in its narrower and less accessible depths. De Jonnès and his companion therefore withdrew into the fissure, the unknown recesses of which offered them a retreat into which it was most unlikely that they would be followed for any great distance, all negroes having a horror of such places. They could still hear their enemies, who appeared to have received reinforcements, and to be engaged in blocking up the entrance. After a long period of suspense it became plain that something far worse was in view. A red glow grew out of the darkness, a tongue of flame and smoke leapt upwards, and it was seen that the pursuers

had collected a huge mass of inflammable material at the mouth of the cavern, and had set fire to it. When the bonfire was well alight, the negroes flung into it bundle after bundle of green stavewood (*Sterculia fœtida*), which presently poured forth such dense clouds of suffocating and nauseating smoke that the position became at once untenable. The coughs of the fugitives, as they retreated further in, were saluted from outside with bursts of delighted laughter. Unfortunately, there was an inward draught, and the pungent smoke followed de Jonnès and the girl, and even outstripped them for a time as they stumbled over rocks and boulders in their frantic search for respirable air.

The Frenchman had heard terrible stories of the grim and tireless determination of the blacks in the pursuit of vengeance. He had read of negroes who, in order to poison an enemy, had worked steadily at their project for as much as twenty years. He knew, therefore, that he could not hope to return by the way he had come, and he determined to endeavour to find some other exit. Flower of the Woods told him that the cavern was popularly supposed to run right through the mountains into Caribs' Land, although she did not affect to believe that it could be traversed. It was grasping, perhaps, at a straw; but he decided to proceed, and with some difficulty he induced the girl to accompany him, assuring her that, since the negroes had not frightened her, she was not likely to be frightened by anything which she would encounter in the recesses of the earth. They embraced one another, he says, like a pair of lovers who give rein to their affection, feeling that death is before them, and then they pushed on.

I am sorry to say that Monsieur Moreau de Jonnès, in the course of his career, embraced a good many young women, red, black, and white, with an amount of effusion which can hardly be excused. In Saint Vincent alone he seems, by his own admissions, to have been on kissing terms not only with Flower of the Woods, but also with her sister, Oualou-Couma, or Star of the Morning, with Eliama, the chief's daughter, and with Zami, a little slave. From the openness with which he records these frequent divagations, I conclude that when he wrote he did not contemplate that the story of his adventures would ever fall into the hands of a future Madame de Jonnès. For the sake of domestic peace, I hope that it never did; but I may add, on behalf of the impulsive and sentimental Frenchman, that his love affairs seem to

have been very harmless, and to have inflicted no permanent damage either upon himself or upon his many-coloured divinities.

Progress was most arduous. Along the greater part of the passage the way was so narrow that one had to follow the other; and in very many places the sides approached one another so closely that it was hard to squeeze between them even sideways. When, on the other hand, the walls receded and formed long chambers of some breadth, it was difficult to avoid losing the way. The wanderers could not easily tell in what direction the prolongation of the fissure was to be sought for, nor could they readily make certain of not straying into some network of side caverns, and so getting hopelessly lost.

As for the path itself, it was dangerous in the extreme, being strewn with detached blocks of lava, so that it was necessary for the fugitives to feel the way with the butts of their muskets at each step. Sometimes the road made a sudden downward dip, as if it would lead beneath the level of the sea, or into the very heart of the volcano. The shells which he had found among the mud deposits of old eruptions had convinced de Jonnès that communication existed between the smouldering furnaces of the Soufrière and the sea, and he felt that he might be getting unpleasantly near the focus of the volcano. At other times the track ran up against the base of a long and steep slope, very hard to scale, and then led them to such heights that it seemed as if they must eventually reach the top of the fissure, and emerge into the open air. But, alike at the highest and at the lowest points, the wanderers still found themselves closely imprisoned between two walls. Once only, at an immense and incalculable altitude above them, they saw a bluish patch, and presently a glimpse of the moon reminded them that it was still night. That brief glimpse of the exterior world was the only one they had while they were in the cavern; and, far from cheering them, it impressed them with an almost hopeless sense of the depth at which they were buried, and of the distance which separated them from other human beings.

Flower of the Woods, having so long escaped the malicious machinations of the supernatural powers which she had expected to encounter in the cave, had plucked up her courage and taken the lead. She made a much better guide than de Jonnès, her senses in the darkness being all more keen than his; yet she halted continually to listen apprehensively to far-off rollings,

rumblings, whistlings, and splashings, some of which seemed to be occasioned by slight disturbances in the body of the mountain, others by the escape of volcanic gases, and others by the movement of subterranean streams of water. All this inspired de Jonnès with increasing fear lest they might find the way barred by some lake or river which they would be unable to cross, or fall in with foul gas which would still more effectually put an end to their progress. Fatigue and anxiety at length exhausted them both beyond endurance; and, as if by common accord, they sat down on a drift of sand. In a minute the girl dropped her head upon his knees and went to sleep; and de Jonnès, almost ere he had realised that he was too weary to move further, was sleeping also.

They awoke refreshed in mind as well as in body, and resumed their advance; nor had they gone far before it became apparent that the way was growing easier. The fissure broadened, so that they could move forward side by side, and the path was more level and less obstructed. At last Flower of the Woods declared that she could hear the waves breaking on the coast, though de Jonnès, even when he concentrated his attention, could distinguish nothing. She also saw signs of daylight long ere he could detect any diminution of the darkness of the cavern. Presently, to their unutterable joy, they reached the open air again, and saw, framed within the arch of the entrance, the luxuriant landscape spreading below them. In the very mouth of the cave, however, was a stony basin, about forty feet broad, filled with water which seemed to be in a state of ebullition, while on the surface rested a heavy vapour. Fortunately the water was not really boiling. The bubbles bursting through it were caused by cold gases. The real danger in crossing lay in the vapour. As soon as he approached its level, de Jonnès experienced its effects, and was seized with violent sneezing and a convulsive cough. Seeing that instant and desperate measures were necessary, he ordered Flower of the Woods to hold her breath, and dragged her in. The water was shallow, and swimming was not needed; but in the middle of the pool the girl forgot her companion's injunction, the result being that she lost consciousness, and was saved only by the most exhausting efforts on the part of de Jonnès. He felt himself so weakened and helpless that, caring no longer, perhaps, whether he fell into the hands of friend or foe, he primed his musket and discharged it,

in order to attract attention, and then sank fainting by the side of Illehuë-Arabou.

Tended by Caribs, who quickly arrived, Flower of the Woods soon recovered; but de Jonnès had to be carried up to the cabin of Pakiri and Eliama, and some time elapsed ere he was himself again. His musket shot had been heard by some of the people who were returning from the attack on Kingstown. The Caribs, full of superstition, would not have approached the sulphurous pool, had not the example been set them by the soldiers and seamen who accompanied them; so that, but for the fortuitous passing of the detachment at that moment, de Jonnès and the girl might have perished, even when safety was in sight.

De Jonnès returned soon afterwards to Guadeloupe, and was then employed by Victor Hugues to play in Martinique much the same part as he had played with such unsatisfactory results in Saint Vincent. His business was to stir up the natives and negroes against the British, who had captured the island in 1794, to organise a rising, and to acquire information. He was taken prisoner, but being speedily exchanged, and having rejoined Victor Hugues, he was once more allowed to go to Saint Vincent. He found everything changed. The British had assumed the offensive, and both Pakiri and Eliama had fallen. The French and the remnant of the warrior Caribs had been driven to their last stronghold, where de Jonnès joined them. Most of the non-fighting native population had been transported in the meantime to the island of Ruatan. The French and their friends made a good defence, but at length were obliged to surrender to Sir Ralph Abercromby. De Jonnès, who had been wounded by the explosion of a powder magazine, became again a prisoner to the British, and was promptly sent to France on board a cartel.

Since 1795 the unfortunate island of Saint Vincent has undergone so many terrible experiences that, no doubt, its physical configuration has altered greatly from what it then was. I have never met anyone who pretended to be able to identify the long cavernous fissure in which de Jonnès and Flower of the Woods spent so many hours; yet, at least until just before the last fatal eruption of the Soufrière, the volcanic mass which constitutes the island was seamed to an almost incredible extent with unexplored cracks, caves, and geological faults, and it may well be that the vast cavern of de Jonnès was in his day exactly as he described it.

THE SEA-GULL.

When day is dying,
And the red sun is lying, low and lurid in the darkening west,
And the scud flying,
And the white horses tossing to the wind their teasèd crest;

When night is falling
Dark over billow-beaten wrack and rock and buffeted steep,
And the sprites calling,
Calling to one another in the populous deep:

Easily wheeling,
On balanced level wings he floats with the swift breeze,
Quick glances stealing
From side to side downward upon the fishy seas—

Hist!
A faint shade in the glimmering green of the main!—
Missed!
And with beating wings and dripping feet he mounts again,—
Wake,—wail!

And sweeps sailing
Past many a bluff expectant headland waiting for the tide,
And with long wailing
Startles the drear echoes that in its cavernous hollows hide,—
Wake,—wail!

Or, leisurely rocking,
Broods on the heaving bosom of the insurgent flood,
While round are flocking
The uneasy clamorous fluttering white-winged brotherhood,—

Clamouring, fluttering,
Chattering of sea and wave and wind and life and love,—
Busily muttering,
Uprising, circling higher, higher, higher, settling in the black cliffs above,—
Wake, wake, wake, wake,—wail!

C. H. St. L. Russell.

PROSPECTS IN THE PROFESSIONS.

II. THE BAR.

THE Bar is one of the easiest professions to enter, but one of the most difficult in which to succeed. A good character, a trifling capital expenditure, the giving up of a certain amount of time to the eating of dinners and such an education as will enable a man to pass a simple non-competitive examination, are the only requirements needed for becoming a barrister. But in order to carry off the prizes of his profession, a man will want an independent income sufficient to enable him, for some years at least, to suffer a net loss, and for a long period of years to live substantially upon his private means. He will need unremitting industry and patience during all that period. He must have, moreover, important personal qualities—great force of will, absolute self-confidence, the power of concentrated and logical thought, and quickness of reasoning. All these things are of far larger importance than any gift of manner, voice, or eloquence; but even where the requirements which we have specified are present, they are wholly useless to their possessor without opportunities. Influence therefore—by which we mean the promise or probability of future clients—is the chief necessity of all. We do not say that a man starting upon his career without influence can never make opportunities or attract clients; we shall presently indicate how this may sometimes be done: but we do say that it is an achievement which will task the perseverance and endurance of the ablest counsel at the Bar, and which cannot often be attained until a long period of depressing disappointment has been passed. A parent, therefore, who starts his son at the Bar without interest is starting him upon a struggle of the utmost difficulty, and he should never take this course unless he not only has great reliance upon the capability of his son, but is also able to finance him through the penurious situation which will thereby be created—a situation in which the vast majority of barristers still find themselves long after they have a wife and family.

Supposing, however, that the parent intends to face this position, knowing his son to have self-confidence, good health, and a determination which nothing can shake, he will next ask

what sort of education is the best for one whose profession is to be the Bar.

The examination to be passed is, as we have already intimated, the smallest part of the whole matter—a mere preliminary fence which is hardly to be reckoned among the great difficulties which will have to be encountered by-and-bye. It consists of two parts—(1) an examination in the English and Latin languages and English history, which every man must in general pass before being admitted as a student; (2) an examination in Roman Law, Constitutional Law (English and Colonial) and Legal History, Evidence, Procedure (Civil and Criminal), and Criminal Law, and certain other heads of English Law and Equity prescribed from time to time by the Council of Legal Education, which must be passed by every student before he will receive a certificate of fitness for call to the Bar.

As to the first of these two examinations, it may be observed that exceptions are made in favour of persons (not otherwise disqualified) who have passed a public examination of any University within the British Dominions, or for a commission in the army or navy, or for the Indian civil service or for the consular service, or for cadetships in the three Eastern dependencies of Ceylon, Hong Kong and the Straits Settlements, and in favour of ex-solicitors who have fulfilled certain requirements of the Council.

The education which is desirable for a barrister, apart from the question of examinations, may be of many kinds. It is much more important that the mind of the future barrister should be 'educated' in the proper sense of this word than that any special knowledge should be acquired. An academic study of law is of no extraordinary value, if we may judge from the fact that the most successful men have often made no such study. The education of a public school and of the broadest schools of the great Universities probably afford the best preparation for the life of the Bar. But no such education is in any sense a *sine quâ non*. Eminent members of the Bar have before now begun life as under-clerks or office-boys, and have had no education but the education of a business experience. The law is so all-embracing in regard to the subjects with which it deals that no sort of training which makes men think and which shows them some department of life, as it really *is*, can come amiss; and least of all a business training—for a large portion of the work at the Bar depends for its efficiency upon a knowledge of business. A

knowledge of mathematics, or of chemistry, or of agriculture, or even of horseflesh, may at times be serviceable at the Bar—there is plenty of room for specialists, as in other professions—but a knowledge of 'business' and its ways is of far more general use and application than anything else.

The law of England is a vast subject of study, which can be hardly touched in the preliminary stages of a barrister's career. The law is contained in thousands of volumes, sometimes couched in difficult technical terms, sometimes compounded of varying principles which seem hard to reconcile with each other, and sometimes necessitating the close comparison of numerous sections of statutes whose relation to each other it is by no means easy to define. He who aspires to be a great lawyer must prepare to approach a task which it will take him all his life to consummate. And every successful barrister must be to some extent a lawyer, though there are exceptional men who have enjoyed a moderate practice upon a minimum of legal knowledge. Even this minimum is a mine of learning, compared with what the student of a few months reading can know. The art of elocution may be profitably studied, especially to the point of giving the speaker confidence and ease; but the importance of this part of the business at the Bar is by no means so great as the public usually suppose.

A man is eligible to be called to the Bar as soon as he is twenty-one years of age; but there is no absolute necessity to be called to the Bar at any particular age. It is still possible to be called after a man has failed at other professions. But except in the case of quondam solicitors or others who come to the Bar with their connections ready made, the beginner must begin at the very bottom of the ladder, and will still have all those years of patient industry, to which we have already adverted, before him ere he can begin to reap success.

The four Inns of Court—the Inner and Middle Temple, Lincoln's Inn and Gray's Inn—have the sole privilege of calling persons to the Bar; and the latest regulations should be sought by intending candidates by means of a direct application to these institutions. The necessary expense preliminary to being called to the Bar varies slightly according to the Inn selected, but the average amounts payable are as follows: Admission form, 1*l.* 1*s.* Fees on admission as student (including stamp), 40*l.* Lecture fees on admission, 5*l.* 5*s.* Cash deposit, 100*l.* Fees on call to the Bar (including stamp), 94*l.* When the student has been called

to the Bar his robes—that is to say, the wig, gown, and bands which are required in Court, with the bag and tin box required for holding them—will cost from 8*l.* 8*s.* to 10*l.* 10*s.*, and a fee to the counsel with whom he reads as a pupil will cost him 105*l.* per annum. This amount entitles the pupil to a seat in chambers, with the privilege of reading the papers brought into those chambers—together with coals, lights, services of a clerk, &c., &c. This *status pupillaris*, which often begins before the actual call, lasts at option one, two, or three years as a rule; the longer a man remains a pupil the more, generally speaking, he is likely to learn. Circuit mess-fees, sessions mess-fees, and travelling expenses vary considerably, according to the course adopted by the barrister in regard to his choice of circuits and sessions. The Chancery Bar is the most economical in this respect, and the beginner probably makes larger fees on that side of the Bar, while his outgoings are beyond doubt very considerably less.

When the *status pupillaris* comes to an end, the barrister seeks to fly on his own wings. He probably asks a friend to join him, and if he be in a small way of income, he takes a small room in some set of chambers on the second or third floor. He must now pay for his own room, lights, coal, and laundress, and must guarantee his clerk. The clerk is paid by the clients; but it will be a long while before he is able to satisfy a clerk by the fees which he will thus earn. An inclusive arrangement with other men will cost a beginner from 20*l.* to 50*l.* a year for a share of a room, and the accommodation just referred to, the amount varying according to the position of the chambers.

He now 'devils' for other men, if they will trust him with their work. That is to say, he does their work while they enjoy the fees. This is the almost invariable arrangement on the Common Law side of the Bar, whereas on the Chancery side the fees are shared and the chance of devilling at all is correspondingly difficult to obtain. This 'devilling' is the all-important question for the young barrister: it is a most important thing for him to obtain in this way the opportunity of learning his business, for although the man for whom he 'devils' obtains the fees, he himself obtains what is equally valuable—the experience of an advocate and the knowledge of law and practice and what may be vulgarly termed 'the ropes.' We do not wish to suggest in any way that the man who takes the fees while his devil does the work is doing anything unjust or wrong. It is a mere question of

supply and demand, which as usual fix the price of labour. It is exactly analogous to the custom of apprenticeship, which for so many centuries has worked evenly and well in the world of trade. The young barrister may write books and articles about points of law, or report cases in the Courts, or take notes for leaders. Thus he can learn something of his business and bring himself into notice, but the 'devilling' system provides by far the most useful work which he can undertake with this end in view.

When clients do come, they often do so in a 'questionable shape.' They are, perhaps, clients of doubtful reputation, with disreputable cases and an absence of any intention to pay fees. A barrister's fee, be it understood, is a pure honorarium, and the beginner is at his client's mercy. He cannot sue for his fee, but neither can he be sued if he does his work negligently.

A barrister can never tell when his chance may come. Some have a good backing, and may be regarded as the 'golden lads' of the profession, who are well-nigh bound to enjoy some measure of prosperity before they come to dust. Some very gradually feel their way onwards, becoming, perhaps, the fourth or fifth string upon some solicitor's list of counsel—having been introduced, it may be, to that solicitor when 'devilling' for a friend; and when you are once fourth or fifth string there is good hope of advancement, for even the first strings are not immortal. Some achieve greatness by rising to the occasion and seizing some opportunity which lesser men might have let slip. Thus the story is told that the great Lord Eldon—the son of a Newcastle coal-fitter, and, at the time we are speaking of, bearing the simple name of John Scott—earned his first fame in the following manner. A solicitor brought him a small brief in a case called 'Ackroyd *v.* Smithson.' 'It is only a formal matter,' said he. 'You are for the heir-at-law. It is clear that he has no claim upon the property at stake. You are merely to appear and consent.' John Scott read his brief, and then answered his client, 'I'll be d——d if I consent!' He won the property for his client. He fought alone against the Attorney-General and his two brilliant juniors. He established the doctrine of the 'resulting trust in favour of the heir-at-law on the failure of the purpose for which conversion has been directed.' 'Ackroyd *v.* Smithson' has ever since been one of the leading cases in equity; and John Scott had his steps already upon the first rung of the ladder, up which he was destined to climb to the woolsack.

Some barristers there are who come to their own only after long years of toil, while some few are rich in briefs within a few years of their call. In the case of men without interest this is very rare, and the period of obscurity is usually exceedingly long. The conversation between Mr. Pickwick's attorney and Mr. Serjeant Snubbin about the junior counsel in 'Bardell *v.* Pickwick' is quite true to life. The attorney described Mr. Phunky as a 'very young man. He was only called to the Bar the other day. Let me see: he has not been at the Bar eight years yet.' 'Ah! I thought not,' said the Serjeant, in that sort of pitying tone in which ordinary folks would speak of a very helpless little child.

The beginner with what we have called a good backing has an absolutely immense advantage—not only does he get work and receive fees, but he learns more of his business thereby in two years than the man without interest can do in twelve. In speaking of a 'good backing,' we must again warn the reader that we refer to a direct claim upon briefs. An archbishop, an admiral, a general, or a Harley Street physician—though he may be the greatest man of his age—can do comparatively little to help his son at the Bar. A King's Counsel or even a Judge cannot do much more. It is solicitors, and solicitors alone, who can make a man successful, and next after solicitors come permanent lay clients, such as directors of railway companies, or the magnates of the financial world. At the Parliamentary Bar especially the latter are powerful friends, and the Parliamentary Bar—in the early stage of a man's career, at least—is practically closed to those who are not able to count upon some such support as this.

If the Parliamentary Bar is out of the question, the young barrister must choose between the Chancery side and the Common Law side; and if he select the latter, must carefully consider what circuit and what sessions he will join. The circuit system is not what it used to be; for partly by reason of the improved railway facilities of modern days, which enable London practitioners to run down for a particular case and hurry back again, and partly because of the rise and growth of the local Bars, to which we shall presently refer, counsel have almost without exception abandoned the practice of travelling round the whole circuit; and they have undoubtedly done so wisely, from a financial point of view. Simultaneously they have given up, in a large degree, the habit of dining together. 'Grand nights'—once a matter of

vast excitement and interest—are now upon many circuits regarded as tiresome formalities, for which it is difficult to gather a quorum together. Circuit friendships, which used formerly to be one of the principal delights of the Bar, are becoming almost obsolete for want of opportunity. Those barristers who go on circuit at all are more like commercial travellers than anything else in their rapid movements; while an ever increasing number seem to have determined to stick to London for good and all. We believe, however, that the young barristers will still find it profitable in the long run to go to a few places on circuit in the pursuit of possible briefs; and to whatever places they go at all, they should go regularly and punctually. The late Sir Franklin Lushington said that a circuit Bar 'might be roughly divided into three classes: those who are determined to make themselves heard; those who wish to be heard if God calls; and those who, without objecting to be heard, wish to have their pastime whether they are heard or not.' No better classification could be given; but it is painful to observe that solicitors often do not seem to care upon which of the three classes their briefs are bestowed.

A barrister will go in general to that part of England where he is best known, though the question of the expense in the case of distant circuits is a matter not to be disregarded. The less ambitious barristers—and some who are ambitious too—often decide to 'localise,' *i.e.* to remain in a particular place in the provinces where competition is comparatively slack. We say comparatively, for everything of course depends upon the size and importance of the particular place. At great cities like Liverpool the local Bar is numerous and strong, because the business to be done is very large. The struggle is nearly, but not quite, as severe as that which must be faced in London itself; and the chances of rising to the top of the profession are nearly, but not quite, the same as those belonging to the Londoner. In a little provincial town, upon the other hand, one man may sometimes have the whole field to himself; and even in the smallest it is often possible for this reason to earn a livelihood. For there is not only the 'first pick' of the work at the assizes and the sessions, but there is a permanent supply of small work at the county court and the police court, and opportunities also arise from time to time of appearing at Local Government inquiries and similar proceedings—a source of revenue which, in these days of electric light, and tramways, and light railways, seems to

promise some increase. The solitary barrister, however, in a small town knows nothing of the common life of the Bar, nor of the *esprit de corps* of his profession; he associates chiefly with local solicitors. But his bread-and-butter is far less precarious than that of the general Bar; while as against this must be reckoned the very slight probability of any really great success. Many who do not mean continually to localise nevertheless pin their hopes in their early years almost entirely upon the influence which they enjoy in some particular district. Both those who have such influence and those who have it not must be regular in attendance, if they belong to the Common Law side of the Bar, at some local sessions.

Sessions, like circuits, have sadly deteriorated from the barrister's point of view. There is less and less important work there than in the old days. Crime has decreased; and it is a good wind that blows nobody any ill. Magistrates at petty sessions have power to dispose summarily, and in a manner which pays no heed to counsel, of many matters which in times past must have gone to trial before a jury. And here the enormous competition at the Bar is more obvious to the beholder than elsewhere. We have often seen fifty barristers appear at sessions to dispute six or seven briefs. There is, however, an arrangement which obtains at many sessions called the 'soup' system, by which ALL members sooner or later get small briefs for the prosecution in the less important criminal cases. For this reason no barrister need be for ever a *literally* 'briefless' barrister. These 'soups' are useful to the beginner, as affording his first actual experience in Court; but he will be somewhat depressed by the sight of men old enough to be his father, if not his grandfather, coming to the sessions time after time for the sake of a two-guinea fee. These are the men who have fallen out of the race, and their name is legion at the Bar.

In the army, if a man behaves himself properly and passes certain examinations, he must rise gradually as time goes on and must receive higher pay. At the Bar there is absolutely no guarantee that at five-and-sixty he will be doing more than at five-and-twenty. We have known barristers of thirty years' standing who have attended chambers regularly all that time, but who still are unemployed and have never earned 50*l.* a year. This time of patience is very trying even to the stoutest hearts. For it is necessary to be in chambers from 10 or 10.30 to 5.30

or 6 at least all the time; it is doubtful whether the really keen junior should be absent from his work even during the Long Vacation, and this is true particularly of the Chancery side. It is an indoor life, conducted often in foul atmosphere under conditions very trying to the eyes and head, lasting nominally for about 200 week-days in the year, but really for a much longer period. The more successful a man becomes, the longer his hours of work. A busy junior works ten or eleven hours a day more or less. His Sundays are frequently interrupted, and so are his vacations. On the other hand, the work is never monotonous. There is a new story to consider every day. It touches all kinds of life and all kinds of men and women. On the Common Law side, at least, it is frequently as exciting as anything in the world. A barrister's life is an independent life; he is employed, as labourers would say, to do 'piecework.' He can be entirely his own master whenever he pleases; and he thus enjoys all the advantages—besides incurring the disadvantages—of one who is employed 'by the job.' At the same time, it seems hard to have to look to one class of men alone for all hope of employment—to be entirely and utterly at the mercy of solicitors. And for the man without influence this is particularly hard when it appears that there are now very few solicitors with important briefs at their disposal who have not sons or other relations of their own with a first charge, practically speaking, upon all the work. This circumstance alone has completely altered the relations existing between solicitors and barristers during the last fifty years. Even the plan of falling in love with the 'rich attorney's elderly ugly daughter' is not fraught with encouragement, for it has been well said that in our times the solicitor's 'elderly ugly son' gets all the work. Thus merit in a hundred cases plays but a small part at the Bar.

The best prizes at the Bar are very great. The highest ambition of every barrister is, of course, to sit upon the woolsack. The chances against any given man achieving this position are, of course, immense; and yet every man who is called thinks, and rightly thinks, much of the possibility. There is yet extant a letter, dated January 28, 1861, and signed 'Charles Bowen,' in which the writer humorously says: 'N.B.—I was called to the Bar yesterday. I have already begun to keep a register of all my best and most brilliant remarks, for the benefit of some future author of the "Lives of the English Chancellors."' The world

would have been the richer both for the register and for the writer's Chancellorship, had they been destined to be real; but the fates otherwise decreed.

The Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain is second only in position to the Archbishop of Canterbury, and he enjoys an income of 10,000*l.* a year. The Lord Chief Justice of England has a salary of 8,000*l.* a year. The Master of the Rolls has a salary of 6,000*l.* a year, and the Lords of Appeal in Ordinary have the same. The Lords Justices of the Court of Appeal and the Judges of the High Court earn 5,000*l.* a year each. The Masters of the High Court, the London Police Magistrates, and the County Court Judges earn 1,500*l.* a year each. The Masters of the High Court are chosen either from barristers or from solicitors, but all the other office-holders to whom we have alluded must have come from the Bar.

The Attorney-General makes much more money than any of these dignitaries. His salary is only 7,000*l.*, but he has fees as well, sometimes to a very large amount. The Solicitor-General has 6,000*l.* a year, besides his fees. Of course, the double work, legal and parliamentary, which these officers have to undertake is most arduous, requiring an iron constitution and a mind that requires but little time for rest. The private practitioners in some few cases make larger incomes than any of the official persons at the Bar. It is not indeed many who make 'five figures'; but there may be always one or two leaders who are achieving this. The leaders who are chiefly before the public in ordinary cases do not often make more than from 5,000*l.* to 6,000*l.* a year. Larger fortunes are frequently made by men who specialise in patent cases, who are engaged in rating appeals and compensation work, or who practise their profession at the Parliamentary Bar.

Besides professional success proper, there are various posts to be had by barristers, which may be regarded as the consolation stakes offered to those who do not win the race. And indeed the possibility of these consolation stakes is a matter to be considered, as an important part of the question, by anybody proposing to send his son to the Bar or to go to the Bar himself. In addition to the positions of high dignity which we have already mentioned, and to which a career at the Bar is—with the one exception above referred to—an indispensable preliminary, certain other specific posts may be named as open to barristers. A barrister of five years' standing may become a visitor in lunacy, or a judge of a borough civil court, or the recorder of a borough, or a deputy

recorder. A *practising* barrister of five years' standing may become a lunacy commissioner. A barrister of seven years' standing may become a revising barrister, or an assistant registrar of friendly societies, or secretary to the Lunacy Commissioners. A barrister of ten years' standing may become an Admiralty registrar. A barrister of twelve years' standing may become a charity commissioner or a registrar of friendly societies. Fourteen years' standing qualifies for a clerkship of a petty sessional division, and fifteen years' standing for a commissionership for trying municipal election petitions. These are a few of the posts open to barristers; the list might be considerably augmented by the inclusion of colonial appointments, but the competition for these posts is immense. Even a district commissionership in a Gold Coast swamp —with chances considerably in favour of an early death and a diseased life meanwhile—is by no means easy to obtain.

There are also private positions of trust which fall from time to time to barristers and save some from extinction—secretaryships, directorships, and agencies. There is literary work sometimes to be had of a semi-legal character. And politicians sometimes have a 'job' which may suitably be given to a barrister. But, in the search for each and all of these opportunities every barrister knows that he will have many rivals; while the work of reporters and newspaper men is again regarded as a valuable prize for which many will struggle, and which itself is made the subject of a 'devilling' system similar to that described in relation to the Bar itself.

The most fortunate man is he who obtains a revising barristership and a recordership, two posts compatible with steady practice at the Bar, whose clients gradually increase in number, who has a regular pupil-room where young men pay him a hundred guineas each for the privilege of reading his papers, whose position advances day by day and term by term until the great step of 'silk' can be safely taken, and who has then the bench or a law-officership of the Crown in sight. This is the only career which can form an adequate reward for such a struggle as we have depicted—a struggle of which we do not think that any barrister will say we have exaggerated the difficulties. The lesser possibilities, to which we have adverted, are what the workhouse is to the very poor—something which is calculated to avert despair. But let no man come to the Bar who does not at least *hope* for the greatest, and whose grasp does not exceed his reach.

Finally, in considering the weighty matter of the choice of a profession, whether for self or son, many men will not like to leave altogether out of sight the influence which that great choice may be expected to make upon the good or evil of their lives. Does the life of a barrister tend to the real advantage of himself and others?

It is usual for laymen to scoff at the morality of lawyers, and to suggest that he who will argue either way upon payment of his fee cannot be as honest a man as some of his fellows. We, upon the contrary, believe the truth to be that the standard of honour set by the Bar contributes not a little to raise the whole tone of English life. The disputes of laymen assume a different colour when counsel comes into the matter. People say—and they say it as a matter of experience—something of this kind: 'Now we have someone we can deal with—someone who will listen to reason, who won't shirk the point, and who *will stand by every word of any promise or undertaking which he makes*, not only in letter but in spirit.' It is the prestige of counsel over and over again which makes a bargain or settlement possible, which otherwise the temper or mutual distrust of the parties would have prevented. A barrister's statements on such matters are ingenuous; there is no swearing by the card, no subtle, implied meaning. This is a matter in which the existence of counsel tells for the general good.

There is again, upon the whole, an absence of jealousy and of cliques at the Bar, which compares favourably with other professions. As a general rule everybody plays for the game, and a man's own personal gains or losses are forgotten in the fight. There is a general disposition at the Bar to rejoice, if one may see the best man win. There are no men who harbour resentment less than barristers. Perhaps it is because fighting as advocates teaches men that there are two ways of looking at everything. Be this as it may, quarrels are hardly ever persisted in at the Bar, and causes of strife, which would separate two neighbouring vicars or fellow-churchwardens for ever, are frequently set at rest by barristers in the luncheon interval next after they arise. Barristers tend to be a cheerful race, in spite of the depressing circumstances in which so many of them live. Cynicism and lack of interest in life, real or affected, are not encouraged in the forensic ranks. Public spirit is usually wide-awake in barristers; every public assembly, from the Houses of Parliament to the parish council,

knows them well, and knows them for the energy which they throw into everything which they touch. The courage of the Bar is immense. The youngest barrister is trained from the first to face all the 'powers that be,' to care for nothing but the cause, and to be sat upon by nobody. The late Mr. Baron Pollock used to say that every barrister married for love. The statement is surprisingly near the truth. The great majority of barristers marry young. 'On the strength of our first guinea prosecution we married,' a high dignitary of the law said lately in an after-dinner speech. And we think that the work is all the better for the fact.

We hold that whatever may be the other disadvantages of the Bar, a lowering of morality is not one of them. Many—we fear a large proportion—of those who have been called to the Bar may regret the fact, but we know none who are ashamed of it.

MR. BROUGH'S CLIENT.[1]

BY W. E. NORRIS.

MR. BROUGH was interested and rather flattered when he was intrusted with the defence of the accused in a case which, under the heading of 'The St. Ives Mystery,' had held the attention of newspaper readers ever since Reginald Cleave, a Cheshire landowner and justice of the peace, had been committed for trial on the charge of having wilfully murdered his wife. The mystery, to be sure, was mysterious only in respect of motives, not of facts, if the evidence of the coastguardsman, upon which alone the prosecution depended, was to be accepted as truthful; but so experienced a barrister as Mr. Brough was aware that crimes are not committed without a motive, and none had been assigned or suggested in this instance. A recently married and, in the opinion of all who knew them, devotedly attached couple might, of course, quarrel; but it was difficult to believe that one of them would deliberately drown the other, and the boating accident off St. Ives in which Mrs. Cleave had unhappily lost her life had been pronounced by a considerable number of persons who witnessed it to be a sheer accident. Only the coastguardsman, who, it was true, had had the advantage of being provided with a telescope, doggedly swore that he had seen Mr. Cleave strike Mrs. Cleave twice on the head while they were both in the water, and that after the second blow she had disappeared. The prisoner had reserved his defence, and the magistrates, after consultation, had felt bound to send him to take his trial.

To be summoned to confer with his imprisoned client was just what Brough, a clever and rising man in his profession, wanted, and as soon as he set eyes on Mr. Cleave he said to himself confidently, 'This is a queer sort of fellow, but no murderer.' For indeed Reginald Cleave's countenance told its own tale plainly enough to any skilled physiognomist. His nervous, sensitive, restless mouth was devoid of guile, his gentle brown eyes evidently belonged to one incapable of cruelty, and if his forehead

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and chin receded slightly, the general effect of this was rather one of weakness than—as it sometimes is—of moral deficiency. He began, without preface and with a somewhat rapid, high-pitched enunciation:

'I wished to speak to you, Mr. Brough, in order to tell you quite frankly and unreservedly all about it. That is the best plan, don't you think so?'

Brough nodded gravely. 'An innocent man,' he answered—and perhaps it was not altogether without intention that he laid some warning emphasis on the words—'cannot be too plain-spoken with his legal advisers. In any case, Mr. Cleave, you may rely upon my absolute discretion.'

'Well,' resumed the other a little impatiently, 'I don't want to be hanged, you know. After you have heard my story, you may think it odd that I shouldn't, but I don't. I should hate it.'

'Most people would,' observed Mr. Brough, smiling. 'I am glad to think that there is very little danger of such a misfortune befalling you.'

'Provided that I am innocent, eh? Now, I contend that I *am* innocent, and that you can therefore get me off by any methods that your professional knowledge may suggest to you without doing violence to your conscience. However, you must judge for yourself. I shall have to ask you to listen to me for about half an hour. I don't think I shall require much more time than that; but I can't hope to make myself intelligible unless I am rather long-winded.'

'My time is yours,' Brough answered; 'pray do not think of hurrying. It may be of the last importance that I should know precisely all that there is to be known.'

Thus reassured, the accused embarked upon his narrative, which he unfolded very lucidly and with little hesitation, although from time to time he showed signs of being deeply moved.

'It was at our opening meet last year,' he began, 'that I first made acquaintance with Blanche Sherard, who afterwards became my wife. I dare say you may have heard that she was an extremely pretty girl and greatly admired, besides being a first-rate horsewoman. Like a large number of those who hunt with us every season, she was a stranger in our parts; but she was staying with people whom I knew, so there was no difficulty about obtaining an introduction to her. I asked to be introduced because—not to trouble you with unimportant details—I fell in

love with her at once. Chestnut hair, big blue eyes and a bright, innocent, childlike sort of smile—there you have it. Ridiculous if you like; but I imagine that most people's reasons are ridiculous. Anyhow, we struck up a rapid friendship, which would have increased into something warmer than friendship in no time, if I had had my way. But I did not get my way. Although we met constantly in the hunting-field, although I dined several times in her company, and although she was always as kind and friendly as possible, she found means to hold me at a respectful distance. She was a woman of the world, I may tell you, and at home in smart society, whereas I was what I have always been, only a country squire on a rather large scale, without any fashionable friends or tastes. Of course I was what mothers call eligible, on account of my being a comparatively rich man; but I gathered from what she said that wealth had no special attractions for her. Besides, she could have married anybody. So I could not, and did not, flatter myself that I had much chance.

'My hopes, such as they were, grew a good deal fainter after the appearance upon the scene of a certain man whose name I won't give you, as there doesn't seem to be any necessity for naming him. To save time and—and other things which it may be as well to save, let us call him Smith. I knew him a little from having been at school and at Oxford with him, and I knew that he was rather a bad lot. Blanche, I took it for granted, knew little more about him than that he was good-looking, well-born, a great sportsman, a pleasant-mannered fellow with ladies, and so forth. It was not, of course, for me to enlighten her; nor indeed, if I had wanted to traduce my evident rival, could I have found anything definite to say against him. He was supposed to have squandered his patrimony on the turf, which did not prevent him from owning some uncommonly good hunters, and he had the reputation of being somewhat unscrupulous in his relations with women; in other respects he was not, so far as I was aware, much worse than his neighbours. Blanche and he were intimate; they had been so, I gathered, for some months previous to his arrival in Cheshire, whither her presence may probably have attracted him. The people with whom she was staying discouraged the intimacy and did what in them lay to encourage me. Their amiable reasons were obvious, and I need scarcely add that their efforts were futile.

'Now, Mr. Brough, I don't wish to be more prolix than I can

help. You see what the situation was, and, naturally, the longer it lasted the lower my heart sank. Some men perhaps would have found comfort in the thought that in all probability Smith could not afford to marry Miss Sherard, who had no fortune of her own; but I did not look at things like that. I loved her so much—this is the honest truth, believe me or not as you please—that I was beginning to wonder whether I could not somehow or other insure her happiness by transferring some of my useless money to her, when the most amazing and unexpected thing in the world happened to me. One dark evening, after a long run, I overtook her, jogging homewards all by herself, and it gave me a good deal of a shock to discover that she was in tears. Of course I had to ask her what was the matter; of course she wouldn't tell me, and of course I formed my own conclusions. Smith had been riding in her pocket nearly all day. However, she astonished me by declaring impatiently and almost angrily that there was not and never could be any question of her marrying Smith. Then—but I don't think I will tell you in detail what followed; after all, there are things which one doesn't tell even to one's lawyer or one's doctor. It is sufficient for you to know that I extorted from her by degrees an admission which I had not the slightest intention of extorting, because it was to my mind so extravagantly impossible that anything of the sort could be the truth. Yet it was true that she loved me, and that I had made her miserable by my recent coldness, which she was unconscious of having deserved. Those were her own words, and she would scarcely have made such an avowal as that if it had been untrue, would she? Oh, I understand your smile, of course; the throwing over of an impoverished lover in favour of a wealthy one is not an unprecedented occurrence. But as you did not know my late wife, you are in no position to realise how utterly preposterous suspicions of that kind must have appeared to me at the time. The suspicions which I entertained were not less preposterous, it seemed; she laughed at them and at me. I remember that I also laughed myself, far though I was from guessing what excellent reasons there were for merriment at my expense. I suppose I was just about the happiest man in the world on that chilly December evening.

'We were married early in February, her people raising no objections to the haste which I urged. We went to Sicily and Italy for our honeymoon, and it was at Rome that Blanche owned,

with a great deal of hesitation and contrition, how inexcusably extravagant she had been during her spinsterhood. I saw nothing so very inexcusable in it. Women's clothes, as I dare say you know, are far more expensive than ours; she had gone a great deal into society, and her annual allowance would hardly have paid for two of the frocks of which she had been virtually compelled to possess a score or more. Naturally she had run into debt, and naturally I felt it a pleasure, as well as a duty, to pay up for her. Five thousand pounds was certainly a biggish figure; but it so happened that I could have parted with double that amount, if necessary, and never missed it. I have always lived well within my income.

'She was wonderfully grateful and wonderfully good to me. Her idea of repaying me through subsequent economies was absurd, no doubt, but it touched me all the same, and I humoured it by pretending to give up plans and purchases which had been designed for her benefit. She used to say triumphantly, "That makes another hundred pounds off what I owe you, John." At her rate of calculation fifty hundreds would have been knocked off before a year was out, I fancy. But a house in London for the season was not amongst the extravagances which she proposed to deny herself, although she was aware that I was no lover of London seasons. Of course I secured that furnished house—I should have been a monster of selfishness if I hadn't—and we took possession of it at the end of our foreign wanderings, which were protracted until after Easter. Then we had a rather gay time. I can't say that I exactly enjoyed it, for I am a shy man and social gaieties bore me; but I liked to see the universal admiration that was felt for my wife, and I liked still better to hear her say, as she often did when we returned home in the small hours of the morning, that she had had enough of dinners and balls and squashes. This, she declared, should be her last season; for the future we were to dwell peaceably in the country and only run up to London for an occasional week of theatres and shopping. "Not that I shall do much shopping until I have cleared off my debt to you," she would add laughingly.

'It was in June that we were bidden to a very smart wedding. The bride was the only sister of the man whom I have called Smith, and whom, to tell you the truth, I had almost forgotten by that time. His real name was a high-sounding one, and his sister was marrying the eldest son of a duke; so the function was

attended by plenty of great people. After it was over there was a reception in a big house, which lasted a very long time. It lasted, that is, a long time for me, because I was unable to discover Blanche anywhere when the company began to disperse. I wandered about, seeking her, through galleries and corridors; and perhaps—who knows?—it would have been a good thing for me, as it certainly would have been for her, if I had not discovered her. But I did discover her at length, in a small octagonal room which, I believe, contained a valuable collection of miniatures; and Smith's arm was round her waist, and her head had dropped upon Smith's shoulder. That, I dare say, sounds commonplace enough to you. You are an experienced lawyer, and you know that the heads of people's wives often do find a resting-place upon other people's shoulders. But to me it was as though the heavens had fallen and the solid earth had given way beneath my feet. It is all very fine to smile and say that for all human beings the question is merely one of temptation. We make such assertions with regard to our fellow-creatures in general; we don't make or believe in them about ourselves or about those whom we love.

'Still, one tries to behave like a gentleman. I tried, and so, to do him justice, did Smith. He caught sight of me before she did, and, advancing quickly towards me, with a look in his eyes which I interpreted as meaning that if we were going to have it out we must wait for a more suitable occasion, he said: "Mrs. Cleave is not very well. I think perhaps the heat has been too much for her. I didn't like to leave her, but now that you have come I'll just run and get her a glass of water."

'Whether he really got her that glass of water or not I am sure I don't know; we didn't wait for him to return. Blanche was in a more or less hysterical state, but she responded to my exhortations by pulling herself together, and we contrived to effect our escape from the house without arousing much attention or curiosity. As soon as we were in the carriage she collapsed. Covering her face with her hands she sobbed unceasingly all the way home, while I held my peace. It would have been vain to demand explanations so long as she remained in that unstrung condition. Moreover, I knew that she could have none worth hearing to offer.

'Really I was almost grateful to her for offering me none, some hours later, and for merely begging me to take her away

from London at once. The heat, the late hours, the excitement of our recent manner of life—she could not tell exactly what it was, but something or other—had brought upon her a complete nervous breakdown, and she felt that she must have absolute rest and quiet for a time. Oh, not at home! She was not strong enough yet to face congratulating tenants and inquisitive neighbours. She would like, if I didn't mind, to make for some remote, secluded seaside place, where we should be sure of knowing and seeing nobody but one another. I said I didn't mind; and we went down to St. Ives, which seemed to be sufficiently remote and secluded for our purpose.

'Probably, Mr. Brough, you know all about women. At any rate, you probably flatter yourself that you do. I have no such pretension, and I suppose that is why I was utterly bewildered by Blanche's behaviour after we had arrived at our destination. A man would have understood, of course, that what I had not chosen to press for was of necessity only postponed; but I don't believe she did. She recovered her spirits, she was demonstratively affectionate and grateful, she seemed to take it for granted that no questions would be asked. She had the air of thinking me rather unreasonable and rather cruel when at last I said that, since she was now convalescent, I must request her to give me a truthful and intelligible account of her relations with Smith.

'The account which she was pleased to give me was at first neither the one nor the other. Only after I had been compelled to tell her that I could not believe one word of what she was saying did she grow agitated and veracious. Then, indeed, her candour left nothing to be desired.

'"Very well. If you insist upon hearing all, you shall hear all," she exclaimed. "I do love him, and I married you without loving you, because I loved him. There! Perhaps you can guess what my motives were."

'I answered that I was not so clever as that, and, on being urged to be more explicit, she owned that she had married me—or, rather, induced me to marry her—in order to get Smith out of a rather awkward scrape. It appeared, to cut a long and discreditable story short, that the man was trustee for his sister, and that he had converted to his own uses a matter of five thousand pounds, which he was bound to account for before her wedding-day. During the winter he had confided this pleasant state of things to Blanche, at the same time, I presume, pointing

out to her how it was that he was precluded from offering his hand where his heart had been given; whereupon she had heroically resolved—oh! she fancied her conduct quite heroic, I assure you—to sacrifice herself, not to mention your very humble servant, in the manner that you know of. Those apocryphal debts of hers produced the required sum; and Smith, she declared, was an infinitely grateful man. His gratitude—and, presumably, his touching fashion of expressing it—had moved her to a degree which, she acknowledged, was not wholly consistent with her duties as a married woman; but I might depend upon it that there would be no recurrence of the scene which I had interrupted, since she had resolved that she would never see Smith again. She was so kind as to add that, although she did not love me, she had a real liking and esteem for me. Frankly now, Mr. Brough, what do you think of all that?'

'I think,' answered the advocate, after a momentary pause, 'that the man whom you call Smith must be a most unmitigated blackguard.'

'I doubt it. I should say that he was only a rather exaggerated specimen of the ordinary selfish fellow. But who cares whether he is this or that? What I want you to tell me is how you would have acted, how you would have felt justified in acting, if you had been in my place.'

'I think,' replied Mr. Brough consideringly, 'that if I had been in your place, and consequently a rich man, I should have felt justified in assigning a separate domicile to Mrs. Cleave for the future.'

'Oh, really? You wouldn't have felt that the only thing to be done was to kill her?'

'Good heavens, no! At that rate we should be having hundreds of murders committed every day. The majority of human beings are deceitful; for practical purposes it may be said that all women are so. But there are excuses for them; and, badly as your wife treated you, you must surely see that some excuse was discoverable for her.'

'You haven't grasped my difficulty. I could have forgiven Blanche anything and everything, because I loved her; only, just because I loved her, it was impossible for me either to live with her or to live apart from her. Now do you begin to understand?'

'I understand,' answered Mr. Brough with a sigh, 'that you are going to impose an uncommonly hard job upon me.'

'Not half so hard a one as circumstances had imposed upon me. You will say, perhaps, that I might have cut my throat. Well, I might have cut my throat. Only then, of course, Smith would have espoused my widow, and they would have lived together happily upon my money until the end of their days. I considered that solution, and had to reject it. I preferred to take Blanche out sailing on a gusty afternoon, and to get capsized by a puff of wind. My intention, as I need scarcely tell you, was to perish with her; but the animal clinging to existence is probably stronger in us than we are aware of until we are confronted with imminent death. Anyhow, we were no sooner in the water than a sudden revulsion of ideas and aims took possession of me. Blanche could swim a little, but only a little; I knew that what had happened must have been seen from the shore, and that rescuers would be with us in twenty minutes or half an hour; I felt——'

'Naturally you did,' interrupted Mr. Brough in some haste. 'Naturally you repented of your insane project, and resolved to save Mrs. Cleave's life, as well as your own, if you could. It is notorious that in many cases drowning persons can only be saved by being rendered unconscious.'

Mr. Cleave laughed. 'Oh, you propose to adopt that line of defence, do you?' said he. 'Well, my wife was certainly rendered unconscious, although she was not saved. As for me, I scrambled on to the hull of the overturned boat, and here I am. And, as I began by telling you, I don't want to be hanged. I remember saying also that you might, after hearing my story, wonder at my not wanting to be hanged; and I believe I added that I considered myself an innocent man. Do you, I wonder, share that view?'

'I shall certainly do my best to impress that view upon the jury,' answered Mr. Brough, who seemed desirous of concluding the colloquy. 'I have your assurance, in which I firmly believe, that you loved your late wife——'

'Oh, you may firmly believe that,' interjected the prisoner. 'And you may likewise believe, what is the truth, that it is misery to me to survive her.'

'I don't doubt it.'

'All the same, I would give a good deal to escape the gallows.'

Mr. Brough did not doubt that either. He defended his client, when the time came, with a skill and eloquence which

triumphed almost from the outset over the case for the prosecution. He was able to show that Mr. and Mrs. Cleave had lived together upon the most affectionate terms, that the husband could not possibly have had anything to gain by his wife's death, and that, even upon the extravagant hypothesis that he had, for some occult reason or other, wished to kill her, he could scarcely have selected a more clumsy and improbable method of achieving his purpose than the one suggested. Furthermore, short work was made of the coastguardsman, who lost his temper under cross-examination and was sternly rebuked by the judge for using unbecoming language. In court much sympathy was felt for the prisoner, whose acquittal by the jury, after only a few minutes' deliberation, evoked an irrepressible burst of applause.

The trial had a tragic sequel, for the unfortunate man blew his brains out that same night. That his mind should have become unhinged by the terrible ordeals through which he had passed was not deemed surprising; but one of the many ladies who had followed the proceedings with interest avowed, in subsequently discussing them with Mr. Brough, that the theory of insanity did not altogether satisfy her.

'I don't know what to think about poor Mr. Cleave,' she said. 'During the trial I was quite sure that he had been wrongfully accused, but now I begin to have doubts. Was he really innocent?'

'He said so,' answered Mr. Brough drily. 'After all, questions of innocence or guilt are not always mere questions of fact, though the law, of course, can only treat them as such. Somewhere or other there is a man who was indebted to the late Mr. Cleave in more ways than one, and who could probably tell you better than I can what to think of him; but as that man goes by the name of Smith, and as his address is not known to me, I am afraid you may have to look about for some time before you secure the advantage of his opinion.'

ALMS FOR OBLIVION.

BY RICHARD GARNETT, C.B., LL.D.

III.

THE MINOR WRITINGS OF CHARLES BROCKDEN BROWN.

> Time hath, my Lord, a wallet on his back
> Wherein he puts alms for oblivion.
>
> *Troilus and Cressida.*

THERE is a celebrated dictum of Keats—not to be told in Gath, for in his day it made sport for the Philistines—to the effect that

> Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
> Are sweeter.

Such must also have been the opinion of a contemporary poet, Thomas Lovell Beddoes, for in a letter to his friend Kelsall he describes himself as the author of many celebrated unwritten productions, 'among which I particularly solicit your attention to a volume of letters to yourself.' How it is possible to melodise and not to melodise, to write and not to write, remains the secret of the poets: though De Quincey came near penetrating it when he indited a series of most affectionate epistles to his daughters, but never posted one of them. Coleridge achieved much in this line by leaving the conclusion of Christabel to the imagination; and perhaps a still further advance was effected by Nathaniel Hawthorne, whose American note-books, so incomparably superior to his European, are strewn with conceptions of unwritten stories invested with all the weird fascination of the stories which he did complete. There they are, fit for their beauty and originality to endure for ever, but for ever petrified, like those dried Indian seeds which dealers in Oriental curiosities mingle with their boxes of shells, bright and tempting to the eye as the shells themselves, but like the shells for ever incapable of germination. Nothing has more of the indefinable charm of the 'unheard melody' than the plot which none but the contriver can elaborate, and the fragment which none but the author can complete.

> The silent organ loudest chants
> The master's requiem.

Hawthorne is the greatest imaginative genius that America has yet produced, perhaps the only American who, when such demigods as Homer and Shakespeare have been eliminated, stands in the foremost files. Yet, like most great men, he had a precursor. Sometimes the new moon is accompanied by a spectral companion filling her imperfect orb, 'the ghost of her dead mother,' according to Shelley; 'the old moon in her arm,' according to the nameless bard

> Who made
> The grand old ballad of Sir Patrick Spens;

by which even the newly-created Adam or the newly-healed Bartimæus who had never seen the moon might infer that the moon he gazed upon was not the first that ever came into being. Such an antecedent luminary in relation to Hawthorne was Charles Brockden Brown (1771–1810), a man whose fragments, although unlike Hawthorne he strove to complete them, have like Hawthorne's the undefinable charm of 'melodies unheard.'

In Brown's finished writings the future Hawthorne exists like the genie in the vase, faint airy cloud, confined to narrow limits, not yet a colossal figure with one foot on the Old World and the other on the New. But if Brown, though a writer of true genius, does not possess the superb genius of Hawthorne, he is psychologically no less interesting a figure. His life is like the house of the Greek interpreter in 'Anastasius,' all homeliness without, all magnificence within. The idealist, in outward seeming gentle, patient, self-sacrificing, hardly distinguishable from a publisher's drudge, is with the pen the creator of romantic situations whose fault in art is to be, without being absolutely impossible, too persistently abnormal; and is at the same time the exponent, while too reserved to be the champion, of the most advanced speculations of the European intellect; and, like More and Campanella and the youthful Hartley Coleridge, the legislator of states existing solely in his own brain. Apart from the merits of his writings, he has two accidental but indefeasible claims to remembrance, as the first American novelist, and the first American who earned a livelihood by literature. But he is more interesting in himself, a man of great gifts repressed by feeble health, and the unfavourable conditions incidental to a country only beginning to learn to value literature, dwelling, as it were, in a penumbra, neither quite visible nor quite invisible to his contemporaries and the after-world. The fate of his completed writings is like his own, they are neither

quite dead nor entirely alive. They were republished some years ago in the United States in a very handsome edition, but this was limited to five hundred copies. It is long since any of them have been reprinted in England, where perhaps they are best known from the affection entertained for them by Shelley. Peacock's account of this is worth quoting, as a brief and accurate statement of the special claims of the individual books:—

'He was especially fond of the novels of Charles Brockden Brown. The first of these novels was "Wieland." Wieland's father passed much of his time alone in a summer-house, where he died of spontaneous combustion. This summer-house made a great impression on Shelley, and in looking for a country house he always examined if he could find such a summer-house, or a place to erect one. The second was "Ormond." The heroine of this novel, Constantia Dudley, held one of the highest places, if not the highest place, in Shelley's idealities of female character. The third was "Edgar Huntly." In this his imagination was strangely captivated by the picture of Clitheroe in his sleep digging a grave under a tree. The fourth was "Arthur Mervyn," chiefly remarkable for the powerful description of the yellow fever in Philadelphia, a subject previously treated in "Ormond." No descriptions of pestilence surpass these of Brown. The transfer of the hero's affections from a simple peasant girl to a rich Jewess displeased Shelley extremely, and he could only account for it on the ground that it was the only way in which Brown could bring his story to an uncomfortable conclusion.

'These four tales were unquestionably works of great genius, and were remarkable for the way in which natural causes were made to produce the semblance of supernatural effects. The superstitious terror of romance could scarcely be more powerfully excited than by the perusal of "Wieland."'

This witness is true. Shelley's admiration was not misplaced. Constantia Dudley actually is one of the finest characters in modern fiction, with affinities to the Theodora of 'Lothair.' Shelley was unquestionably thinking of her when he gave the title to his lines 'To Constantia, Singing,' and the circumstance no doubt led Miss Clairmont, to whom the verses were probably inscribed, to add the name to the accumulation of names which encrusted themselves like barnacles around the original nucleus of 'Jane.' 'Nothing,' adds Peacock, 'so blended itself with the structure of Shelley's interior mind as the creations of Brown.

Nothing stood so clearly before his thoughts as a perfect combination of the purely ideal and possibly real, as Constantia Dudley.' Nor did Shelley err in his admiration for the finest scenes in the other novels. The picture of the haggard somnambulist, unconsciously digging a grave for himself or another, is one of the most striking in fiction. The description of the pestilence in 'Arthur Mervyn' deserves to stand beside the other world-famous descriptions of plagues by Thucydides, Lucretius, Boccaccio, Defoe, and Shelley himself in 'The Revolt of Islam.' Shelley's notion that it behoved a person of taste and feeling to have a summer-house to 'combuss' in is delicious; but Peacock's mention of it would do 'Wieland' great injustice if it led to the supposition that a case of spontaneous combustion formed the leading incident of the novel. 'The superstitious terror of romance' which, as he justly says, could scarcely be more strongly excited than by the perusal of 'Wieland,' is created not by the Fire King but by the Prince of the Powers of the Air. The motor is ventriloquism. When the story is finished a feeling almost of resentment arises at finding how one has been played upon by a device so ordinary with mountebanks, but the perusal is all breathless attention. It is a pregnant illustration of the Pepysian motto, 'Mens cujusque is est quisque,' that an English novel on the same theme, Cockton's 'Valentine Vox the Ventriloquist,' is farce of the broadest style, though legitimate enough in its way. Brown's other great instrument of terror was turned by Cockton to like account in 'Sylvester Sound the Somnambulist.'

It will be clear that Brockden Brown's completed novels cannot be reckoned as 'alms for oblivion,' but the same is not the case with his fragmentary writings. These sustain to the works on which his reputation rests much the same relation as the latter bear to Hawthorne's—that of a penumbral fringe, scarcely visible, but, if once caught by the eye, attractive with a strange haunting beauty. Collected and published by the pious care of his friend William Dunlap, they could not be expected to attract much attention, and have indeed drifted as far down the stream of forgetfulness as has ever been the case with works of an author of undoubted genius, not dissimilar in spirit or reputation from those to which he is indebted for his fame. The most remarkable is 'Carwin the Biloquist,' a variation upon 'Wieland.' Carwin is the ventriloquist whose machinations, fell in their

results but innocent in intention, have brought ruin upon Wieland and his house. He appears before the survivors of his victims and relates his own story in extenuation.

Carwin, whom we have learned to know as the maleficent, though perhaps not malevolent genius of the house of Wieland, appears in his own narrative as the instrument of a still more potent personage in the background, an Irishman named Ludloe. The conception of Ludloe is characteristic of the author's age. Ever since Pythagoras, and perhaps from a much earlier period, it has been the belief of many that the regeneration of the world may proceed from a society of elect spirits, withdrawn to all appearance from active participation in its affairs, but operating all the more effectually in secret, sometimes conceived as invested with supernatural powers, sometimes as depending solely upon superiority of wisdom or the control of boundless wealth, but always as sublimely disinterested, and always, alas! eminent rather in speech than in action. Such persons exist at this day in many imaginations in the shape of the Mahatmas of Tibet; and they were something more than imaginations in the days of Brown, when Spartacus Weishaupt and the Illuminati perplexed monarchs with the fear of change, and appeared on several occasions bodily in the dock. Ludloe is such a personage. He casts his eye on Carwin as a promising disciple, and the rather as Carwin has a quarrel with society as represented by his aunt, who has disinherited him. What renders Ludloe an interesting figure, and particularly representative of his time, is that he is an incarnation of the philosophy of Godwin. While providing for all Carwin's needs with lavish generosity, he scoffs at the idea of Carwin's being under any obligation to him. What he is doing is either just or unjust. If unjust, he is highly censurable; if just he is but doing his duty. Nor will he allow Carwin to follow any occupation. 'All the liberal professions were censured as perverting the understanding by giving scope to the sordid motive of gain, or imbuing the mind with erroneous principles. The mechanical trades were equally obnoxious; they were vicious by contributing to the spurious gratifications of the rich and multiplying the objects of luxury; they were all destructive to the intellect and vigour of the artisan; they enervated his frame and brutalised his mind.'

Carwin accompanies his mysterious benefactor to Dublin, and is thence despatched to Spain to study human nature. By

address and dexterity he insinuates himself into the confidence of all orders of society, and has sundry love intrigues, which he does not deem it necessary to impart to his patron, from whom he also conceals his faculty of ventriloquism. In other respects he is entirely candid, and is rewarded by the receipt of long letters, treating of the perfectibility of man. When his education in the art of reading human nature is supposed to be complete, he returns to Dublin, and Ludloe begins to open his purposes. 'A number of persons are leagued together for an enterprise of some moment. Their existence depends upon fidelity and secrecy. You are ignorant of all the members, excepting myself. Candidates have freedom of choice. Inviolable silence is necessary. To this they are not held by any promise. They must weigh consequences, and freely decide; but they must not fail to number among these consequences their own death.

'I love you. The first impulse of my love is to dissuade you from seeking to know more. Your mind will be full of ideas; your hands will be perpetually busy with a purpose into which no human creature beyond the verge of your brotherhood must pry. Believe me who have made the experiment that, compared with this task, the task of inviolable secrecy, all others are easy. To be dumb will not suffice. If the sagacity of others detect your occupations, however strenuously you labour for concealment, your doom is ratified, as well as that of the wretch whose evil destiny led him to pursue you.

'In a few years you will be permitted to withdraw to a land of sages, and the remainder of your life will glide away in the enjoyments of beneficence and wisdom.'

While Carwin is endeavouring to make up his mind, an adventure befalls him. He walks by night on the road out of Dublin, and encounters a band of robbers besetting a lady in a carriage. Unseen himself, under cover of the darkness, he exerts his ventriloquistic faculty to such purpose, counterfeiting the voices of approaching rescuers, that the robbers fly; while the no less alarmed lady makes off with her equipage in the opposite direction, leaving Carwin ignorant whom he has preserved. Returning home, he is surprised and not a little discomposed to find Ludloe in his chamber. The confusion is entirely on his side, for Ludloe tranquilly explains that he has come to make a most important communication, and is awaiting Carwin's return. Would Carwin like to be rich? Will it suit him to be free and

independent? Would he object to a country-house with charming grounds and the other usual appurtenances? There is one disagreeable condition annexed. He must fly in the face of philosophy, and contravene her precepts by becoming a slave-owner. He must assume absolute dominion over the person and property of another human being, now possessed of the establishment in question. 'That being must become your domestic slave, be governed in every particular by your caprice.' In plain English, Carwin must take a wife. The lady is Mrs. Bennington, widow of a merchant whom he has known in Spain; and who, as the judicious reader will have divined, speedily proves to be the identical lady whom he has rescued from the robbers. Ludloe's motives for promoting the match also peep out, and most Machiavellian they are. He desires to test to the uttermost Carwin's power of observing inviolable secrecy, and is sure that he must be equal to any trial if he can withstand the blandishments of an Irish widow.

Carwin has now two momentous problems to perpend. He derives no help from Mrs. Bennington, who is mysteriously withdrawn from observation. Ludloe himself disappears for awhile, leaving the key of his private library in Carwin's hands. Carwin makes ample use of the privilege, and comes in time upon a mysterious map. At the end of a large atlas containing maps of the usual description, appears one of an unknown country. Two islands, apparently of the size of Great Britain and Ireland, are laid down between the South Pole and the Equator, 'where the transverse parallels of the southern tropic and the one hundred and fiftieth degrees of east longitude intersect each other:' in the neighbourhood, therefore, of the Gilbert Islands. They are covered with towns with strange and unheard of names. Can this be the land of sages where Carwin is to spend a serene old age if he withstands all temptations to loquacity? He recurs to the map for more light; the atlas is gone! Ludloe has returned and carried it off; yet the key of the chamber is still in Carwin's keeping. Ludloe, then, has a duplicate key. Why not? But has he a duplicate key to every room in the house? And, if so, what may not happen to Carwin?

Carwin's mind is full of agitation. Ludloe begins to press him to make a full disclosure of his thoughts and the incidents of his life, as a prelude to his initiation. Carwin is not entirely unwilling, but shrinks from the revelation of that which dis-

tinguishes him from other men—his power as a biloquist. At the same time he cannot feel certain that Ludloe does not know this already, and that concealment may not be heavily visited upon him. In an agony of irresolution he meets Ludloe. They converse, and by-and-by Ludloe asks him:

'"Perhaps you recollect a visit which you paid on Christmas Day in the year —— to the cathedral church of Toledo. Do you remember?"

'I answered in the affirmative.

'"And yet," said Ludloe with a smile, "I suspect your recollection is not as exact as mine, or, indeed, your knowledge as extensive. You met there for the first time a female, whose nominal uncle, but real father, a dean of that ancient church, resided in a blue stone house, the third from the west angle of the square of St. Jago."

'All this was exactly true.

'"The female," continued he, "fell in love with you. Her passion made her deaf to all the dictates of modesty and duty, and she gave you sufficient intimations, in subsequent interviews at the same place, of this passion, which, she being fair and enticing, you were not slow in comprehending and returning. As not only the safety of your intercourse, but even of your lives, depended upon your being shielded even from suspicion, the utmost wariness and caution were observed in all your proceedings. Tell me whether you succeeded in your efforts to this end?"

'I replied that, at the time, I had no doubt that I had.

'"And yet," said he, drawing something from his pocket, and putting it in my hand, "there is the slip of paper with the preconcerted emblem inscribed upon it, which the infatuated girl dropped in your sight, one evening in the left aisle of that church. That paper you imagined you afterwards burned in your chamber lamp. In pursuance of this token, you deferred your intended visit, and next day the lady was accidentally drowned in passing a river. Here ended your connection with her, and with her was buried, as you thought, all memory of the transaction.

'"I leave you to your own inference from this disclosure. Meditate upon it when alone. Recall all the incidents of that drama, and labour to conceive the means by which my sagacity has been able to reach events that took place so far off, and under so deep a covering."

'I still held the paper he had given me. So far as memory

could be trusted, it was the same which, an hour after I had received it, I burnt, as I conceived with my own hands. How Ludloe came into possession of this paper, how he was apprised of incidents to which only the female mentioned and myself were privy, which she had too good reason to hide from all the world, and which I had taken infinite pains to bury in oblivion, I vainly endeavour to conjecture.'

Here the story ends abruptly, leaving us no more enlightened than Carwin as to the means by which Ludloe had possessed himself of the Spanish damsel's missive. Perhaps they would have appeared disappointingly trivial. The general course of the story is easier to conjecture. Ludloe is casually mentioned in 'Wieland' as an enemy whose pursuit Carwin seeks to shun. This enmity must in all probability have been occasioned by some infidelity of Carwin to his trust, and this must have been combined with the exercise of his biloquial faculty, of which hitherto he has made little use. In 'Wieland' he makes too much; the first preternatural accents, as they are deemed, are intensely thrilling, but the effect wears off by repetition. Perhaps Brown himself had become tired of them; but, apart from this, his imaginative faculty was finding other means of expression. It would in most cases appear an evident proof of the decay of imaginative power if a novelist laid fiction aside and took to writing a system of geography; but topographical detail was such a passion with Brown, and he possessed such a faculty for creating foreign scenes from skeleton descriptions, that the inference would be inaccurate as regarded him. He had another taste which must have absorbed some of his creative power—that for the delineation which would often keep him for hours 'absorbed in architectural studies, measuring proportions with his compasses, and drawing plans of Grecian temples or Gothic cathedrals, monasteries or castles.'

Brown's passion for ideal geography is powerfully illustrated by two fragmentary romances, 'Carsol' and 'Adini.' 'Carsol' was designed to have been a description of an imaginary community, in the manner of More's 'Utopia.' The island is evidently intended for Sardinia, a 'hermit kingdom' whose almost total withdrawal from the current of European history during the middle ages leaves an ample field for the imagination. Brown is well acquainted with the mysterious 'nuraghe' that cover the land, and makes good use of these and other local particulars.

Had his fiction like 'Utopia' been confined to the polity of the ideal state it might have been highly interesting, for Brown was a real thinker, and his thought was expressive of some of the characteristic tendencies of his time. Unfortunately he is resolved to create illusion by the minuteness and circumstantiality of alleged historical detail, and so minute and circumstantial is he as to become tedious even to himself, and hardly to arrive at the ideal community for which alone his book ought to have existed. His history, moreover, is neither fact nor fiction, but a travesty of the former which keeps the reader perpetually on the fret. He is more successful with a work more undisguisedly fictitious. Adini, a refugee Italian, takes up his quarters in an American township, and amazes the inhabitants by his opposition to their ideas of history and geography. 'If you believe De Pagès, you must believe that cunning impostor Robertson!' He seems insane on such points, but otherwise he is highly intelligent, and, if mad, there is at least a method in his madness. The story is broken off before we obtain a solution of the problem. The situation resembles one which actually at the very time existed at Bristol, where Gilbert—Southey and Coleridge's mad friend, author of 'The Hurricane'—was ranging about discoursing upon the 'Gilberti,' a nation dwelling not in the Gilbert Isles, but in the interior of Africa; of kin, as he affirmed, to the house of Gilbert, and ready to receive him with open arms as soon as he should present himself among them. When at last Gilbert disappeared altogether, Southey, thinking that he might have gone in quest of his Ethiopian kindred, caused inquiries to be made upon every vessel bound for Africa; but, on the contrary, he had gone to America to receive a legacy, which cured him.

All Brown's novels that gained any celebrity, and all the fragments of his works that belong to the department of fiction, rest upon an identical idea, the development of a human character under the pressure of abnormal circumstances. This, if not altogether a novelty, for the definition would fit 'Hamlet,' was still in the main, so far as its application to the English novel is concerned, an invention of William Godwin's, and, if not the highest or purest form of art, did much to extend the resources of English fiction. It is a curious question whether Godwin's writings, fictitious or philosophical, will ever regain the seminal influence which they undoubtedly possessed in their own day. There are few stronger evidences of the impulse they were at one

time able to communicate than the effect produced upon Brown by 'Caleb Williams,' the only romance of Godwin's which he had any opportunity of reading before he began to write his own. This was no doubt assisted by the impression he had already received from Godwin's philosophical works, as well as Mary Wollstonecraft's. 'Alcuin,' his first book, a dialogue on marriage and the position of women in general, is impregnated with Mary Wollstonecraft's ideas. Yet even here the rapid transmission of thought from Britain to America is remarkable, and shows intellectual affinity overcoming political estrangement. His own idiosyncrasy considered, Brown could hardly have had a better model than Godwin, whose strong points he readily appropriated, while his invention and descriptive power veiled the dryness of Godwin's necessarianism. One defect master and disciple shared: neither had the faintest perception of humour. Brown's style, also, is exactly Godwin's, a constant succession of short, staccato sentences, more conducive to lucidity than to eloquence. This unbroken brevity of phrase becomes at length somewhat fatiguing, but has the advantage for a writer of fiction whose themes are so remote from ordinary experience as Brockden Brown's, of aiding to produce the illusion that, extraordinary as these themes may appear, they are really matters of fact. Brown has not the same power of producing this illusion as is possessed by Defoe or Borrow, but he is not very far behind them.

This pedestrian method of narrative is illustrated by a long and not very readable fragment, 'The History of the Carrils and Ormes,' where the deliberate enumeration of minute pseudo-historical particulars becomes tiresome; and by Brown's only attempt at historical fiction, on a subject where the attempt to produce illusion is needless, since the tale has the warrant of history. It is the massacre of Thessalonica, perpetrated by command of the Emperor Theodosius in A.D. 390. The treatment only differs from the historical by the introduction of numerous fictitious circumstances for effect, the narration being put into the mouth of an imaginary contemporary. The slow, steady accumulation of details tries the reader's patience, but gradually produces the effect of a lowering, stifling atmosphere of terror and awe, out of which the catastrophe leaps like a thunderbolt. The conclusion well expresses the feelings of a Roman of that unhappy age, finally bereaved of all hope by the calamities of the times:

'I envy the lot of such, but it will quickly be my lot. The period of forgetfulness, or of tranquil existence in another scene, is hastening to console me. Meanwhile my task shall be to deliver to you and posterity a faithful narrative. The horrors of this scene are only portions of the evil that has overspread the Roman world, which has been inflicted by the cavalry of Scythia, and which will end only in the destruction of the Empire, and the return of the human species to their pristine barbarity.'

Brown was also a writer on political questions, and an able one, but even here he characteristically adopted the methods of the romancer. His most remarkable political production is an address to the United States Government in 1803, on the advantage of acquiring Louisiana from the French. This vast trans-Mississippian territory, of which the existing State of Louisiana is but a small portion, had been ceded by Spain to France in 1801; and in 1803, Napoleon, fearful of its falling into the hands of England, was meditating the sale of it to the United States. Brown's pamphlet is to some extent, as it is described, an argumentative appeal to the United States Government, but the vital part of it is a supposititious translation of an imaginary French State paper, represented to have been drawn up by a French Counsellor of State, recommending the acquisition of Louisiana by France from Spain at the time when this acquisition, soon actually made, was being negotiated between the two countries. The counsellor, in the first place, dissuades Bonaparte from attempting the re-conquest of St. Domingo, and rather advises the colonisation of Australia. This may seem fanciful, but, in fact, Napoleon, about this very time, sent out an expedition designed to pave the way for this undertaking; and a map, reproduced in Mr. Rose's recent biography of him, adorns the southern coast of Australia with the title, 'Terre Napoléon.' Considering, nevertheless, that the project is not likely to be carried into effect, the counsellor extols the advantage to France of the possession of Louisiana, and ingeniously introduces the circumstances which ought to render the French occupation distasteful to the United States, thus indirectly, for American readers, recommending the purchase which Brown is advocating. Can it be thought, the imaginary Frenchman asks, 'that the Americans will willingly admit into their vitals a formidable and active people, whose interests are incompatible at every point with their own; whose enterprise will inevitably interfere and jar with theirs; whose

neighbourhood will cramp all their movements, circumscribe all their future progress to narrow and ignominious bounds, and make incessant inroads on their harmony and independence?' This gives occasion for drawing a picture of the American nation as, in Brown's view, it then appeared to the nations of Europe. It is thought to be weak on several accounts. From having a hostile nation of slaves in its bosom. From the clashing interests and jealousies of the States. From its division into hostile factions. From the perverse attachments and antipathies of the people to European nations. From the want of national spirit, patriotism, sense of national honour, or love of national glory. From the love of gain and the exceeding sensibility to commercial interests. From the ease with which the Indians can at all times be set on to carry fire, the tomahawk and scalping-knife into the American settlements, by any European nation having colonies on their borders.

The cradle of the young giant was indeed beset by serpents!

Louisiana was purchased from France in 1804, and the acquisition is regarded as the chief glory of the administration of President Jefferson. Brown was not a supporter of this administration. He thought Gallatin, the Financial Secretary, its ablest member. Madison, Secretary of State, and afterwards President, he considered, in Dunlap's words, 'a man of genius and industry, somewhat slow and much deficient in energy. Mr. Jefferson, as a polite scholar and accomplished gentleman, doubting received truth, and extremely credulous to whatever served to confirm his favourite theories; deficient in the science of politics, but of great address in screening himself from dangers and responsibilities.' These judgments have been substantially confirmed by posterity. Brown was a man of great sagacity, and if not an original thinker himself, was receptive of the ideas of others, as shown by his attitude towards the speculations of Godwin. Had his life been prolonged, he might have become a distinguished publicist. It must be remembered that he was not a New Englander, and was exempt from the Puritan antecedents which contributed to mould the most eminent American writers and thinkers of his day. Neither was he affected by French influences like Jefferson and his circle. He was a native of Pennsylvania, the Quaker State; his lineage was Quaker; his mental constitution exemplified that union of sobriety with mysticism which characterises the Friend.

SOME PEASANT WOMEN.[1]

ALTHOUGH few, perhaps, could say precisely how and when they have become acquainted with her, everyone must know the typical old cottage woman of a certain order of books, who studies her Bible, keeps her spectacles among the geraniums on the window-sill, has a little hoard of money concealed in the teapot on the mantelpiece, and, according to her religious persuasions, entertains the Dissenting minister or the vicar's daughter to tea. She is an engaging old figure in her way. Illustrators of Christmas numbers show her toothless and benevolent of aspect; yet not more benevolent (nor much more toothless) than we are led to suppose her by the writers. She is spotlessly clean, she is eaten up with humility, she can curtsey to her betters in a way to turn good children green with envy, she is invariably a widow, has generally been the heroine of a love affair with a scamp named Willie, and the only human failing allowed her is an infrequent dash of low cunning, to temper for incredulous readers her astounding simplicity. In short, when one considers how worthy she is, and how many times the pattern of her has been recommended to the poor, it seems marvellous that any well-appointed cottage home should be without a specimen of her in the flesh.

Truth, however, is wont to be marvellous, and, odd though it seem, it is yet true that in actual life I for one have never met a living example of these charming old ladies; and after a good many years in a rural neighbourhood I should still be at a loss where to put my hand on one, if inquiry should be made.

It is true that in many respects the parish is peculiar. Reclaimed within living memory from shaggy furze-common, little of the land in our village has ever felt the plough or known the attentions of careful farming. All round the valley there has been prosperous agriculture, but just here the cottagers dwell for the most part on the same small holdings into which the common was broken up at the time of enclosure forty years ago. Consequently we have no rich farmer, no employer of labour, to curb the rude independence of the inhabitants. The folk earn their living outside the parish; within, a little awed, it may be, by the

[1] Copyright, 1902, by George Sturt, in the United States of America.

policeman, they do much as they like, with none to interfere. The ancient Radical gibe at the influence of squire and parson in our villages would have little meaning in this one. There is no squire; and the parson struggles single-handed at his unappreciated task. Consequently the village is without those mellow traditions of respect for 'the gentry' which are preserved so religiously by those toothless old tea-drinkers in the books. It is no place for ladies like these, and few things would more surprise me than to learn of the existence of such an one in the neighbourhood.

But indeed I am inclined to doubt the existence of this particular kind of old woman in any parish whatever. I am sceptical of the whole species. They have a suspicious air of being one of those curious types, unrelated to anything real, which art occasionally originates for its own purposes, and perpetuates for purposes of art-manufacture. One guesses where they originate. Their birthplace is the country parsonage; their home is in the imaginations of the idly good. You can tell by some elusive flabbiness in the make of them that they have not stood up to life and faced it as your real cottage woman must do unless she will die.

Of quite another breed are the village women I have met; the old are different, and the younger in no wise bid fair to become at all like the examples set before them, by picture and letterpress, in the pages, for instance, of the parish magazine. Their fate would not permit it; but were their fate kinder it is not credible that their own temper would ever accept that feeble mould. For although old women have long been a byword for all sorts of feebleness, working-class old women at least ought not to be accused of that particular brand of insipidity attributed to them in Sunday books. They should have their due. It should be remembered of them that they are the mothers of strong men, of men who drink beer rather than tea, of men perhaps the most capable for hard work that the world has seen. Changed though they must be from the pattern of their remote forebears, who helped turn Britain into England, the mothers of our peasants retain probably more of the tough quality of Alfred's days than is to be found among women elsewhere. Whatever else may be said for them or against, they are English to the marrow of their aged bones.

The first that comes to mind, for instance—what an unconscious but true patriotism she displayed in her fears for the threatened

robustness of the young generations! She is dead some years since, but I have not yet forgotten the exalted fierceness of her indignation in the only conversation with her that I ever had.

True it is that in some ways Mrs. Stone was an exceptional person. Gaunt and tall—she must have stood six feet high—and without suspicion of a stoop, at eighty years old she walked regularly two or three times a week from her cottage to the town and back—a three-mile walk—to do her poor shopping. Poor it was, because she could no longer work, and the five shillings allowed her weekly by the parish was practically all her income. I do not know how she contrived to live on next to nothing, but through all her long life she had schooled herself to live on very little. Her husband was bed-ridden for thirty years before he died, and required so much attention from her that she was unable to go out to work, like other women of her class, but kept her home together by such scanty laundry-work as could be brought to her. To make both ends meet on such terms was a sufficient exercise in thrift, without saving; consequently in her old age she owned no little hoard of money, but went half-starved, although none, seeing her, would have suspected that. Her severe, aquiline features, her tall, slowly-moving form, would have suited the abbess of a convent, and so would her austere temper. She was a devout Churchwoman; had had visions too—one of them a vision of glory in heaven that had almost thrown her backward in the road, she told me, and had intimated to her the coming of blessed death to a cancerous neighbour whom she had been helping to nurse. In another way also her piety was instanced. On being given the opportunity, though she was not urged, to subscribe her penny to the village Jubilee memorial (a much-needed pump it was to be, by the way) old Mrs. Stone was forced reluctantly to confess her poverty as it has been described above, but, she said, 'I'll give ye my prayers,' and she said it in such a manner that made the offer seem worth taking, though it could not figure on a subscription list.

What followed, however, has for ever freed her in my mind from taint of resemblance to the namby-pamby old things of parish-magazine manufacture. For, having evinced her approval of such practical benefits as a Jubilee pump, she turned upon other innovations that displeased her, to rend them with her anathemas. The Board school, she maintained, was doing nothing else than sap the vigour of the working classes. She objected to it root

and branch. In her opinion the children ought to go to work, as she had done. At seven years old she began earning her living, her first task being the picking of stones off a field; and her first lesson that 'she must learn to put up with a hard crust if she couldn't get a soft one.' Traditional wisdom this, handed on to this old woman by her own grandmother, whom to think of takes you back into English history and times before parish magazines and tea were dreamt of. Mistaken or not in her opinions—it is as the reader may think her—Mrs. Stone knew (what is sometimes forgotten elsewhere) the importance to us English of preserving our racial toughness. She at least, with her husband bed-ridden for thirty years, had learnt better than to omit that quality from her code of virtues, or to substitute for it the toothless amiability that one reads of. Accordingly there was something other than the training of the vicarage in her outburst against the musical drill upon which she had seen the girls one day engaged in the school playground. 'I see 'em there,' she said—and the words have remained in my memory—'a-tiptoin' and posturin', and I told the schoolmissus, "You be doin' 'em a dam sight more harm than you be good," I says.'

Such round speech is not quite what one would expect from the old cottage woman of respectable fiction. It is, however, a thing one must be prepared for, and not be shocked by it, if one is to become acquainted with the old village woman as she really is, and know her habit of thought and speech.

There is Mrs. Turner, for instance—'Old Sally,' as her friends call her. That forcible expression to which Mrs. Stone resorted in her indignation Old Sally uses frequently, with a wicked joy in the fun of the thing. Language would be a poor thing for her purposes without expletives to give it lissomness and strength; but with such aids she adds to the gaiety of the village. With great approval my friend Bettesworth told me one day of Old Sally's encounter with the School Board attendance officer. It seems that she had been employing a grandson to fetch water and do other errands for her in connection with her laundry-work, and this at hours when the boy should have been at school. In due course the officer waited upon her to explain that she must cease defying the law of the land; but Mrs. Turner began to laugh, teasing the man. 'Will they send me to prison, then? If they do, they'll ha' to keep me. And there won't be no washin' there, will there?' 'She kep' on,' continued Bettesworth joyfully,

'chaffin' of 'n. Made 'n that wild! "Anyhow he'll have to go to school," he says. "Well, will they send me to prison?" she says. "D——y, I shan't have no washin' to do there, shall I?" She didn't care. She said she'd send 'n when he got time. When she could spare 'n he should go.'

You have but to see her to understand that Sally Turner must needs talk thus forcibly. To be forcible is an essential part of her nature; possibly—I do not know—it is the only trait in her own character of which she has much consciousness. In that rejoinder of hers to the attendance officer, 'They'll have to keep me,' one may hear where her pride dwells. To be 'following the wash-tub' and keeping herself at seventy-three years old—this makes her life more than worth living. She glories in it. Compassion would be thrown away on her; she would as willingly receive a tract from you on the sin of swearing. It is doubtful if she ever goes to church—that is an indulgence that women of her sort ungrudgingly leave to 'the gentry.' Her idea is to be strong; to feel her strength triumphantly grappling with necessity. It is easy to believe that Old Sally knows all about 'putting up with a hard crust'; and if the practice of that endurance through her long life has left her still unrefined, she for one would think that no matter for regret. As it is, she owns the respect of all her class. Four or five stalwart sons find a grim amusement in her humour; all the other men, their friends, see in her a sort of veteran comrade. She has been the equal of men all her life; and the fearlessness born of that equality may be traced in her hard, tremendous jaws and in the big, manly voice with which she greets you.

I have spoken of 'knowing her habits of thought'; but actually I doubt the possibility of knowing any such thing. Shrewd, practical, clever in her own way, Old Sally is not the person to have wasted time upon ideas. There has always been enough in the outer world for her to give attention to. She is an outdoor person. Having never been to tea with her or seen the interior of her cottage, I am not well able to imagine her there. She belongs (as I think of her) to two places: her cottage garden where the clothes are aired, and the high-road along which she takes them home. In a most picturesque and sunny spot is this garden, set back against a sandy hillside, with the steep road swooping down outside the hedge to a bridge over the stream-bed, and at once uprising again for the next hill. The valley is narrow

here; the summer sky seems a great arch over it, the spring grows gay and autumn sleeps warm in the sheltered hollow, and the winter clings tight to the engirdling hills or sends its storms howling amongst them. But no temptation ever visits one to idyllicise Old Sally's home. Her hard personality has set its mark there. You see her pig-stye, and her tumble-down shed where the donkey-cart and donkey stand near together. You see, too, that the whole place is a sort of vantage-ground for its owner's observation of the world. Within a stone's-throw are two public-houses; other cottages are clustered round; traffic rattles along the road; and, looking for what old Mrs. Turner is likely to see, you find that all disintegrates itself into details; you see the dust or the mud; shabbiness emerges; people look overworked or overfed; atmosphere gives place to white light and hard outlines; the place is pervaded by a poverty-stricken discomfort, such as would be death to luxurious souls; and yet it is all uncompromisingly 'open air,' with a suggestion of challenge from the weather and from the road, bidding you to be strong or disappear.

And the rejoinder to that challenge—no piously whining resignation, but a hearty, British, devil-may-care, *tit-for-tat* rejoinder—is presented by Mrs. Turner in person. It beams from her when you meet her on the road, magnificently driving in her donkey-cart. With a whack at the slow donkey and a tremendous grin she fires off in fine nasal tone her loud-clanging 'Good mornin', sir,' and drives on, with a wicked twinkle in her old eyes of sheer amusement at the hidden humour of the situation. She is a match for her environment, and she knows it.

It must be owned, however, of Mrs. Turner that, little as she resembles to ungodly eyes those wishy-washy creations who figure in books, she is the sort of lady who would willingly pose as one of them if it suited her purpose to do so. And my impression is that she would play the part very well, or at least well enough to charm some district visitor of literary leanings. And when I picture her at it among her tea-cups, with her large affable smile put on, and the mockery veiled in her eyes, I begin to understand how the real Mrs. Turner might be innocently travestied in a rendering of her by the gentle district visitor.

But what could district visitor, what can anyone, make of Old Sally's near neighbour, that full-fleshed bundle of contradictions, that tender-hearted mother and resolute pork-butcher, that clever seamstress and toilsome field-worker and patient sick-nurse in

one, Mrs. Loveland? In her, I fancy, could one but know her, were to be found epitomised most of the brave virtues, and in her fate much of the distressful history of all her class since it began to be a class distinct. Even in her insignificance she bears out the resemblance. One knows her exceptional usefulness in the world, recognises her ability, compassionates her misfortunes, values the high courage with which she faces them, and yet, looking at her, one cannot truly sympathise, one can only pretend to care. Human in every fibre of her, patient, gentle, strong, and true, she is so remote—she with the class she stands for—from all other English life that it is hard to realise how human she is. She is cow-like. She fails to interest. With fewer qualities, or with those she has less well balanced, she would be a tragical figure; but as she is, there is nothing salient about her, nothing upon which the imagination can seize, saying 'Here is the real Mrs. Loveland.' Her very troubles are of the monotonous kind that the working class is familiar with, and the series of them is monotonous too. And such also would be a recital of her endless useful toils, by which she never profits.

There is no denying it; Mrs. Loveland bores me. When I behold her coming along the road I am fain, if there is choice of another way, to take it. And happily for me she is large enough to be visible at a distance, and, after all, not so wanting in characteristics as to be readily mistaken for another, though there are many of her kind. Sturdily she approaches you, in shape a thick bottle cut off at the neck. Too full-blooded she is; her plump hands seem bursting, and her wide, weather-reddened face looks tightened in her ample bonnet. But it is a face not ill to look upon; it is transparently honest, a face of liquid motherly tenderness, with glowing brown eyes and courageous mouth. If only looking were all! But one must listen too, and when that mouth opens you had better send up a prayer for patience, for you will need all you can get. For Mrs. Loveland is so truthful. She not only exaggerates nothing, she is also distressingly careful to diminish nothing in her narrative. With painful elaboration she burdens her tale with the most trivial details, not because they interest her, but because she is telling you what happened.

One interminable string of inconspicuous details, never plaintive, though often distressful, and all but always tamely dull, such is Mrs. Loveland's talk, and such would seem to be her life. But I do not know whether it is even possible, and I do know it

to be most unlikely, that a good woman could endure an inner life so barren of all dignity, so ignobly trifling, as Mrs. Loveland's would be, judged by her conversation—as though the south-west gale were a series of draughts, and there were never a shower but only numberable drops of rain. That soft-eyed placidity of hers while she is talking, with an unlooked-for smile flickering across her lips just when you expect to see the tears that never come, would seem to betoken a soul feeding on something other than details of no account; and I suspect that truly, could her consciousness—or her sub-conscious life rather—ever be reached, it would be found pervaded by two or three wide sentiments that harmonise and sweeten all details.

I think it must be with her as with the days in the country, especially as with the soft days of winter. For these group themselves into two or three kinds, though never two days are quite alike. You get, for instance, the days of frosty sunshine emphasising certain colours in the landscape—the pale pinks and gleaming yellows and vivid greens; or sombre days, when through the wet clinging air no tints penetrate save indigos and sad purples. So with this peasant woman; her tranquil soul is possessed, I must believe, by several large enduring impressions, into which the details she talks of merge quietly, like tiny blottings of colour in an aquatint.

One of these impressions, probably not known to her, yet deeply felt, would be a sense of the open air across fields and uplands. The contact with reality in hay-meadows or in swede-fields by the sheep-fold, the steady sunshine, the bitter wind, the rain-deluge, or the desolation of miles of snow—it is impossible to estimate how much it means to have one's life permeated day after day, year after year, by such influences as these. Hysteria is held at bay; sentimentalism cannot live where they are. Mrs. Loveland is calm, passive, veracious as the fields.

Entwining with all this, or overlying it in her thoughts, are warm-hearted domestic affections and the steady social traditions of her class. As she trims swedes for the sheep, or picks up potatoes (earning her shilling a day, and receiving something electric with every touch of earth or sting of the bristling swede-leaves) she will be planning (can it be doubted?) her evening duties—some miraculous patching of trousers for her husband, some inexpensive cookery for her invalid son. And, distilled as it were from manifold cares like these, there will go with her

through the open air along the swede rows another satisfaction—vague as that due to the air itself—the satisfaction of keeping her home together, and of being efficient and useful. About the new, harsh-looking, red-brick place where she lives—you could not dignify it with the name of cottage—where we should see only bare floors and discomfort, there may cling for Mrs. Loveland—that tender soul in so coarse a body—an atmosphere more delicious than she herself quite knows.

Suffused thus by the clear light of a few large elemental feelings, the details that otherwise would choke and fret—the cruel squalid details of crushing poverty—become transfigured. As an artist's stubborn material, when at last he can master it, grows precious to him because of its difficulties, so it may be with the burdens of this and many other peasant lives. The struggle holds the life down to those abiding emotions best able to endure and to ennoble it. I cannot on any other hypothesis understand such quiet, clear-eyed courage as Mrs. Loveland's. She lives close to necessity; every day brings her into new contact with it, and each day she proves anew her strength in the contest.

Consequently, nothing comes amiss to her; no emergency can find her unprepared. Working in the fields one autumn day beside her husband—he was digging potatoes and she was picking them up—she heard cries for help from the distant road. But I will give the narrative in her own words, as it emerged parenthetically from a long-drawn-out discourse of many nothings:—

'One day I was out in Novell's fields, pickin' up taters, and all of a sudden I fancied I heard somebody a long way off callin' for help. I listened, and then I says to my 'usband—he was diggin' there aside of me—to keep quiet, not to move, ye know, so's we might hear. And then we heard it again, out from the lane under they trees on Cashford Road, just where you comes out of the gate from Johnson's field opposite the other gate what goes into Priestley's. So, as soon as we heard, we set off runnin' across the field, and I come first' (the husband being a lame man), 'all pankin' and blowin', and there in the road laid that young Brown—you knows, what's father lives across here. He'd bin knocked down and run over by his horse and cart, and he laid there a-screamin' and hollerin' and twistin' hisself about. So I bid with 'n till the chap what had gone to fetch a cart to take 'n into the doctor's come back, and then we helped get 'n into the cart.'

No 'nerves,' you see. Mrs. Loveland does not cultivate them.

It was she who, when a neighbour's pig was *in extremis* and the pork-butcher far away, found resolution, for the neighbour's sake, to get over into the pig-stye and slaughter the suffering animal with her own hands.

The explanation she herself gives of her fortitude, or of some of it, is a very mechanical affair. She has not shed tears, it seems, since the death of her first husband (who, by the way, was Bettesworth's brother) twenty-five years ago. Until that happened she was always liable to cry; but her mother, seeing her shudder at going into the room where the dead man lay, said to her, '"Harriet, you never need mind about going where there's anybody dead. The dead can't hurt ye; 'tis the livin' as can hurt ye." And since then I've never seemed to mind, and I've never shed a tear. I can't.' Yet occasions for weeping have been plentiful enough; she has lost a son and two brothers within the last twelve months. But her self-possession never leaves her. Some time ago, her husband being then very ill, she urged him to consent to removal to the workhouse infirmary. It was in vain. He only raved at her, accusing her of scheming to get rid of him. But unwittingly he was teaching his wife a lesson in self-reliance; and when his illness returned, and an operation had become imperative, she was wiser than to consult him upon what must be done. She 'never said nothing,' but silently made her arrangements, and the man has been at the infirmary this three months.

The quiet resolution with which she effected this is what I find admirable—and like her class, too—in Mrs. Loveland. As to the removal of her husband, there can have been no alternative. At that time he was not the only invalid in the house. There was the son already mentioned—a lad of nineteen, afflicted with some obscure debility—at home and unable to work. Of him, without lamentation, and simply as a matter of fact, the overburdened mother remarked, 'He used to say, "You won't have to walk to the town much longer, mother. I be goin' to buy a donkey and cart." But it don't sim much likelihood o' that. . . . Comes over, he do, all his face and neck the colour o' that clock-case, with blood rushin' to his head; and then his hands and legs sims to go numb and dead for want o' blood.' Besides this trouble the woman has a worse one still, in the shape of her eldest son (by her first marriage), who is a confirmed drunkard, and half lives upon his mother. Bettesworth and the neighbours upbraid her for sheltering him. 'It's the only fault I got to find

with Harriet,' says Bettesworth, 'for harbourin' that *thing*. You can't call him a *man*, though he is my own brother's son.' Unfortunately, whatever he is called, the fellow adds to the difficulties of the housekeeping. With these two sons encumbering her—the one an invalid, and the other only sober when he has spent his latest earnings—it was clearly out of Mrs. Loveland's power to nurse her husband through a severe operation and a lingering illness.

The situation was complicated for her by the necessity of earning the family income, such as it was, by her own labour. How she contrives at all is a standing mystery. The economics seem impossible. I suppose a little money would be earned by strange needlework. 'For mendin' trousers, and so on,' says Bettesworth, 'she's as good as any tailor. Several workin'-men's wives, as you'd think ought to know better how to do it theirself, sends their husband's things to Harriet to be done.' Bettesworth, too, took to her the other day a new pair of hedge-trimming gloves 'to be sewed all round the fingers. It makes 'em last as long again.' More regular, but otherwise little more profitable than such jobs as these, is the field-work. Here is Mrs. Loveland's own account of the potato-gathering last autumn: 'You works by the day, from eight o'clock to five, and no leavin' off to go away. But then, there's a shillin'; and if 't en't much, still, 'tis a help. That's what I says about Andrew'—the invalid son; 'if he can go 'long o' me and earn sixpence or ninepence it all helps. But, o' course, this time o' year there en't so much to be done. If 'twas summer, there'd be hop-tyin' and hay-makin'.' Not being summer, but late autumn, there were only the chances of the mangold crop between her and the winter. Still, 'every little helps'; and it doesn't occur to one to be a martyr—or it seems not to occur to Mrs. Loveland, living (almost literally, one would think) on the crisp autumn air over the potato fields.

One clings to the hope that there are compensations to Mrs. Loveland in the bracing air—if not for her niggardly pay, at least for certain discomforts incidental to field-work. These autumn labours are at times intensely disagreeable. It was some days after her conversation as above reported that Bettesworth was speaking of her. '*There's* work for a woman!' he said. 'Up to her knees in mud and water all day!' I did not understand. 'What was she doing?' I asked. 'Pickin' up taters last week, all among the swedes and young hops. And now to-day she goes

into the mangol'; and they be all *wet*, ye know.' I did not know, but I could easily imagine the wetness of the heavy mangold leaves, amidst which Mrs. Loveland earns her shilling a day, while her skirts and sleeves grow sopping wet and the sticky soil climbs upwards to knees and elbows. 'There's work for a woman!' This woman is sixty-three or four years old.

I dwell upon these details with a feeling mingled of satisfaction and bitterness—satisfaction at thought of the difference between the real English peasant-woman and the feeble caricatures of her, bitterness at thought that such true worth could ever be overlooked, even by dilettante folk searching only for those insipid little qualities they regard as virtues.

To account for the appearance in any book of the lamb-like old imbeciles we all know one is driven to paradox. The creators of them are guilty of a kind of anthropomorphism—though I dislike the insidious flattery implied in that term. Imagining themselves men and women, they proceed to postulate in the peasant a most unlikely resemblance to themselves. In the savage peasant-world it is their object to discover (as though it were worth while) at least the rudiments of that amiable harmlessness so assiduously cultivated in their own. The results are known: silly pictures of sillier beings endowed with virtues that would be agreeable to the district visitor, but unprovided with so much force of character as would bring them to the old age they are supposed to have reached. The savage who ascribes human attributes to the powers of Nature is not much more in error than is the refined person who reads his or her own choice sentiments into the peasantry; and just as the savage's humanised storm-spirit is a portrait of himself, so in these old women of the little books you may trace the likeness of those who put them there.

Of course, that modern sympathy for life out of which this error may occasionally originate is in itself a very worthy quality to cultivate. When not carried to excess—as by a lady I know who chastises her cat for bird-catching, and would fain convert pussy to a humanitarian life—the tender anthropomorphism of delicately nurtured people is a thing entirely admirable. One likes to see it exercised in the yearning care for the comfort of flowers or in the companionable petting of domestic animals, but it is quite another thing when the habit is extended towards men and women who have their own and not our outlook upon life; and the kindness, if not the kindliness, of the practice is then much

open to doubt. This, however, is what we are all prone to forget in viewing the labourer. We would see in him not his ideal, but our own. We resemble the lady who would convert her cat, looking that the peasant should become refined, and not stopping to consider whether daintiness could meet all the exigencies of the fields. In short, we are too much disposed to make domesticated pets of the peasantry; whence it sometimes happens that the most well-meant efforts to help them are met with surly suspicion. But when compassion is intruded in the wrong place even a Mrs. Loveland would find it hard to bear, and a Mrs. Turner would be not unlikely to let loose the strong language of resentment upon the impertinence.

GEORGE BOURNE.

ON THE WRITING OF ENGLISH VERSE.

AN EXAMINER'S REVERIE.

AMONG the miscellaneous duties which fall to the Fellows of my College is that of going forth in rotation, as July draws to its close, to conduct the scholarship examinations of a great South-country public school. A few years ago my turn came round, and for a laborious ten days I sat embedded in mountains of papers, shot in upon me by all the upper forms. The time was drawing to its end; the perusal of many scores of cubic feet of foolscap had left me harassed and jaded, unable to screw up a smile even for the wildest blunders of my young friends. It no longer struck me as eccentric to find *liber consulendus* translated as 'a son who deserved to be made a consul,' or to be told that (contrary to the general rules of physics) 'the Severn rises in the Bristol Channel and flows up into Wales, where it ends.' The last stage of the examination had, in short, arrived, when the eye and the blue pencil act automatically, without any conscious assistance from the brain. Yet at last a spasmodic contortion spread over my face, and I found, to my surprise, that I was laughing. The cause was a certain hexameter verse contributed by the Fifth Form. It was the translation of a line of a sounding original:

> The billows are swelling with might, with might.

And it ran, with a beautiful literalism,

> *Cum vi, cum vi, cum vi, cum vique æquora turgent.*

It can have been no ordinary Fifth-Form hand which penned that hexameter. The old stager would have turned it, tamely enough, into his own jargon, as:

> *Æquorei turgent mirando robore fluctus,*

Or as,

> *Viribus, en! magnis turgent nunc æquora ponti.*

But this was something better; probably the despairing effort of a mathematician or a scientist, driven in against his will to join in the classical toils of his classmates.

Even such a verse is but a short joy; but when the laugh was

over the thread of my occupation seemed broken, the blue pencil refused to work any longer, and my jaded brain turned off to ponder on the whole subject of the writing of verses in a foreign tongue. It was not the ordinary aspect of the old Latin verse controversy, so dear to belligerent schoolmasters, that kept running through my mind. It was the sad and pathetic thought that if the Latin composition of to-day amuses the examiner, how much more would it have amused the ancient Roman? What quiet pieces of humour he would have discovered even in the most blameless of our copies of verses, when some word of well-marked associations found itself in unwonted company, or a colloquialism jostled a high tragic phrase. Horace and Juvenal, alas! can never rise again to wonder at the Anglo-Latin muse. But we, though many of us know it not, are happier than they. There exist a considerable number of writers of foreign nationality who are good enough to compose English verses for our joy and delight. They have not, so far, commanded a very large public, but the few who have come upon their effusions will never cease to be grateful to them.

The best known of these authors is the German gentleman whom Mark Twain mentions in his 'Tramp Abroad.' Every reader of that excellent book will remember the poem that began:

> Once I saw, in a dark night,
> In supernatural beauty bright,
> Of light-rays was the figure wove,
> To share its light locked hair strove!

I forbear to quote more of a gem which has already been given to the public. But, having come upon these same poems myself at Wiesbaden, lost among guide-books of an impracticable antiquity on the dusty top shelf of a hotel library, I can give hitherto unknown passages from them. Those quoted in the 'Tramp Abroad' are by no means the most interesting or characteristic stanzas of the inimitable 'Rhine Legends.' I select as worthy of even closer study a poem named 'The Gnomes of Kederich.' It is a graphic narrative of adventure, dealing with dwarfs and Kobolds and *Bergmännlein* in general. In the first scene appears one of these spirits of the waste, whose description I must extract:

> A small peaked hat, in tassels rich,
> Surmounted his stream-flowing hair
> Red in its colour, which
> The much-furrowed brow seemed to bear.

He twirled a small stick in the air,
And unintelligibly talked,
Appearing a being of precipice rare,
Who just from the ravine had walked.

The phrase, 'a being of precipice rare,' may puzzle the reader for a moment, but when he reflects he will recognise that it is an admirable synonym for a 'being of strange descent.' We could quote many such examples of translators betrayed by their dictionary, from the annals of the Fifth Form, such as that of the traditionary boy who rendered, 'The general took the lead and scaled the wall,' by *dux plumbum cepit et murum desquamavit.*

But to proceed with our German legend. After bringing the reader to the mountain home of the Kobolds, the poet proceeds to describe the company there assembled:

It was their chalk-like faces—
In colour like their clothes—
Writhing about like twilight graces,
Filling the cavern with living throes.

The last line we recommend to all versifiers who are not too proud to borrow. But about the last but one we are not so sure; a 'twilight grace' is a little too mysterious for us. The cause of the assembly of dwarfs now needs explanation; it is simple:

The On-Kederich-living gnomen
Have a knight's child stolen.

But not long after appears a deliverer for the kidnapped damsel. A sympathising throng gathers round him and asks:

Are you the selected knight?
The youthful maiden's bold adder?
If it should be that we have guessed aright,
So please you mount this ladder.

Up the ladder goes the 'bold adder,' and in his final triumph we will not follow him. But what, the reader will inquire, is an 'adder?' After due consideration we are driven to conclude that it is merely a syncopated form of 'adorer.' Noting that the English bard is permitted to write that

Some flow'rets of Eden ye still may inherit,

and to sing of murd'rers and o'erflowing brooks and thund'ring shocks, the Anglo-German author has merely been taking licence to treat an inconveniently long word in the same fashion.

Such a phenomenon as a foreign bard bursting forth into English verse is comparatively rare in the lands near home. But removing into a remoter continent we find a whole school of bards who woo the English muse with accent not her own. Everyone is acquainted with Baboo-English prose composition; the genuine biography of Mr. Justice Mookerjee has been read by many; the letters of Hurree Bungsho Jabberjee, B.A., framed in strict imitation of the Mookerjeean original by Mr. Anstey, kept 'Punch' lively for a year, and familiarised us with the beauties of Bengali prose. But it is not generally known that verse also falls within the scope of many of our talented fellow-subjects on the Lower Ganges. I have come upon, and carefully stored away, more than a score of Anglo-Bengali poems. They began to appear, few and far between, in the 'sixties; now they are comparatively common; old friends in India send me three or four every year, and the latest are the best.

Speaking generally, these compositions may be divided into three classes—complimentary, narrative, and lyrical. The first-named category is by far the most numerous: many important personages, both native and European, seem to be blessed with a sort of poet-laureate or domestic bard, who makes it his duty to present them with a suitable copy of verses on all occasions of importance. Sometimes his lyre is tuned in gratitude for favours past; sometimes it clearly peeps out that the favours ought to be in the present, but still remain in the future.

A few examples may suffice. Here is the epithalamium of Walter ——, Esq., dated December 11, 1900:

BLESSING TO THE HAPPY PAIR!

What a cheerful is the day,
When all have gathered in a gayous way
To celebrate the marriage scene of twain—
Annie Mathilde with her Walter swain!

The scene looks beautiful and grand
When all around the kinsmen stand:
And between them shines the lovely pair
Like moon among the planets fair.

I wish such happy days to stay.
Long as the stars on the Milky Way,
The faces that look so bright and fair,
May long live the happy pair!

Much more characteristic, however, is another poem commemorating a four-fold marriage event in the family of a native notable of Dacca, whose court poet is very anxious to set forth all his titles to distinction. It is dated May 13, 1899.

MARRIAGE IN THE NAWAB'S FAMILY.

There are grand nuptials among the highest
In this our town, the noblest, richest, and best,
Of four marriages on a certain date,
When four couples were linked for life by fate.
The whole of Dacca was for a month astir
With feasts and rejoicings both far and near.
Four sons of Khajeh Mahmood Yusufjan,
(Who is famous Vice-Chairman and Chairman
Of the District Board and body municipal,
Visitor of Lunatics' Place, and of Jail,
Who as owner of pretty large estate
Serves the Sircar as Honorary Magistrate)
Were married with great pomp and éclat
As to beat such past events quite hollow!
On marriage day town was illuminated
With myriad lights and gas celebrated.
All classes were fed both high and low,
And a great feast for Hindus did follow
(Such rare treat *they* seldom enjoyed before,
Four times their ordinary meal and more).
May the choicest blessings of Heaven pour
On their father and on Nawab Bahadur,
Who are so generous, kind, and noble,
Both of them free from all common foible.
May they shine in this Dacca firmament
And live very long in all enjoyment.

The reader should note the Moslem poet's quiet contempt for his Hindu fellow citizens, and particularly study the prosody of this poem. *Éclat* and hollow should be made to rhyme by pronouncing the last syllable of each as if it rhymed with jaw, or paw. 'Highest,' 'Chairman,' 'enjoyment,' must all be accented on the last syllable, or the real rhythm is missed.

Our last sample of the complimentary poem is one cast in a less cheerful key—a fragment of a valedictory address to a retiring judge.

Oh sweet soul! Thou purest blossom
  Of those fragrant fortunate Isles!
Well worthy of thy famous home,
  Affable, good, and decked with smiles!
Lives thy name in our inmost core,
Adieu! Adieu! We meet no more.

To spend the leisure thou hast won—
Across the deep willst sail a-slow,
To live at home beyond our zone,
Where we alas! but seldom go;
Lives thy name in our inmost core!
Adieu! Adieu! We meet no more.

Of narrative poems I possess two, each autobiographical in character, and each notable among the rest of my collection for the extreme intricacy of its metre. The first begins at the very beginning:

When Mamma spend day in confinement,
I was, was, was, an infant.
Then I leave Mamma, and crawl,
Grow to a creature rampant, small,
Omnivorous, quadruped.
I am next become a biped
And pass my days in an education
Suitable to my situation.

But in manhood troubles fell upon the poet, and he found that

Neither my decision,
Nor the idiotism
Of my paganism
Could fulfil me with provision.

This fact led him to appeal for the sympathy of the two local magnates of his district, in an address commencing with the impressive proemium:

Kings, world conquering ones, delight in two sorts of mortal,
One of them wise in war, one of them wise in Council.
If so, why should not Mr. McCarthy be one of the latter?
If so, why should not Captain Buchanan be one of the former?

Apparently the suit urged in such flattering terms was not unsuccessful, for the author signs himself on his title-page as director of a Government dispensary in Lower Burma. Being happily established in the service of the *Sirkar*, he boasts that

I am stuffed each day with bread and salt from Her Majesty's Museum.

Let us hope that he was more scrupulous in weighing out his calomel than in manipulating the English language.

The author of the other autobiographical poem in my collection was evidently a person of a much more cheerful disposition. He begins:

I identify myself to thee
As an etcher to the Indian
Atlas, in Surveyor General's
Office, Engraving Department.

. . . . . .

My great-grandfather Seyfullah
Firstly served the Government:
He who was called by Hastings
Jemadar to his Lordship.
In return for his services
Land was granted by Government.
Family members from his breed
Love and Devotion is their creed.
Generation in generation called Fakir,
And one or two in retirement.

. . . . . .

Returning thanks, I tell to thee
Family large and large,
Generations and generations
Eating, drinking, merriment.
I am getting rupees sixteen,
Monthly income of that land,
Which is enough to myself
To support my retirement.

Lyric poetry is often obscure: but the following sample of it 'dedicated to my parental affection, F. G. M——, Esq., Magistrate,' surpasses in difficulty any other in my collection. Its drift would seem to be religious, but its exact meaning I cannot fathom; nor does its title help, for it is simply headed

A Song.

Get up ye travellers, be awake!
The Nectar Master pulled screen!
Behold his glory published by dawn
And creatures singing fame!
Open thy heart and look in it,
Lovely picture answereth same.
Call him, Sufi, in the morning,
If thou wouldst have the peace,
Thy journey shall be happy one,
And thou would get the Ease.

On the other hand, the very short poem which follows explains its subject clearly enough, but needs a considerable amount of verbal comment. It is called—

THE GHOST-CHILD.

Dear Father, Loved Mother,
  Touch me not, Touch me not!
Me bantling devotee of Moon:
  Touch me not, Touch me not!
The ashed body clad in sack,
  Cemetery-dweller, Wandering Jack.
My best wishes to thee all,
  Touch me not, Touch me not!

A 'bantling devotee of the Moon' is a fine example of the consequences of using the dictionary of synonyms. The author wished to describe the child's ghost as a 'young votary of the night'; using his lexicon, he finds bantling as an equivalent for child, and devotee for votary. Hence comes the charming collocation of words in line three. A 'wandering jack' seems at the first glance an inexplicable phrase: but all becomes obvious when we realise that the poet looked up 'will-of-the-wisp,' and found 'Jack-o-Lantern' as the equivalent.

Many more are the poems which we could quote: there is an address to his majesty the King and Emperor, whose loyal grandiloquence extends over long columns; the lines:

'Mid monarchs he takes Alexander-rank
He is strong in the field, just Hercules frank

may serve as an average sample. There is a drinking song, and at the other end of the scale an address to the human soul, on the transitory nature of terrestrial things. Each has its gems of diction, but enough has been already quoted to give a fair idea of the finds that await the English inquirer, when he is patient enough to run through the 'poet's column' of the Bengali newspaper, or to seek out and save up the transitory leaflet (often printed in golden letters and on a paper sprinkled with an elaborate powdering of gold) which the local bard circulates—not without adequate remuneration, we hope—on the day when something of importance occurs in the household of his patron.

C. OMAN.

THE SWORD OF HONOUR.

WHEN we knew for certain that the Germans were coming, we moved the hatching hens from the henhouse into the house and put them into the wood-cellar. You know the window from that cellar opens under the steps leading up to the big door. Well, it was from that cellar that I overheard the conversation between two of the German officers quartered with us—we had then a colonel, three other officers, a doctor, and more than sixty men on the farm. Not to frighten the hens—which, even as it was, were wild enough, though we had moved them as carefully as we could, taking them in their nests after dark—I did not bring a light into the cellar, but only left the door ajar to the staircase, where the day was still lingering, while I looked in to see if the poor little disturbed mothers were all in their right places for the night. The officers were speaking softly; but when I heard their voices I stole nearer the open window, and from thence I could hear every word they were saying. And when I heard what it was about, you may be sure that I listened with both my ears open, and so I came to know that they were to break up at three in the morning to meet some other troops at the cross-road near Ollerup, and then go on so as to be at Kiddelund just before dawn, that our men quartered there might be taken by surprise.

When I think of it I always wonder how the words I heard did away with my body, and, so to speak, set free my soul or spirit, or whatever it is that I am, from all considerations of it, just as you may sometimes to save your skin abandon your clothes to look after themselves as best they may. It would seem that the body has a separate life of its own, some kind of home rule or self-government by which it is preserved, and even makes itself useful when left to itself. Mine did so that afternoon. It saw the hens into their places, it locked the door and put the key on the proper nail; and then it called my little help, Grethe, and carried me off across the yard to the henhouse with the evening meal for the other hens. And all the time I was thinking of nothing but what I had heard, and of what I could do to save our men.

Now, when my husband left for the army some of the very last words he said to me were: 'If you don't know what to do while I am away, speak to Sören.' Sören had been on the farm ever since my husband was a child. He was an invalid now, having lost one leg in the war of '48; but he could tell every man's duty, every beast's right, and every thing's place, so that in most cases it was the natural thing for all of us to turn to him for advice. Besides, I thought I was sure of Sören's sympathy in this case, for he had a good healthy hate of the Germans, such as one can only feel when the enemy is in one's country. It was Sören who had said, 'I am not bloodthirsty, but I could easily hold Bismarck while he was being skinned,' and I knew he did not boast. So I told Grethe to go and find Sören and send him to me.

A child of twenty was not a very strong head for a big place like Kelkjærgaard, and when my husband was to leave for the army my parents thought that it might do as well without me, and that I should do a great deal better at home with them. But Bertel and I agreed that if we expected everyone to stop and do their duty, we could not very well run away ourselves. 'And of course you will like to serve, as well as the rest of us,' he had said, and I knew from the way he looked at me when he said it that he was proud of me as well as sorry for me. And those words ran in my head, and, together with my great youth and my inexperience, went a good way to keep up my spirits and my courage when some months later the enemy came and took possession of the whole house, and, making themselves masters on the farm, made us all realise that war is war.

They were as civil to me as I would let them be. I remember being both vexed and hurt by the colonel's indulgence towards me. It seemed to me that he looked upon me as a mere child—which very probably he did. And yet, in a certain way they mortified me the very first day by locking up the steward in his own room, and leaving me to be both master and steward to the whole place as best I might. It was not nearly so trying as you might think it would be, for somehow when the enemy is in the country you shake off from your shoulders the whole load of daily cares. It does not seem to matter the very least that the wrong calves are killed, or that gates and windows are left slamming on their hinges during the whole night. Not even the fact that the young horses are spoiled and made wild by sheer mismanage-

ment makes any great impression upon you, as I know from my own experience. And when I think of how the puppies in a flowerbed or a loose horse on the lawn after a spell of wet weather may make me lose my temper nowadays, I almost feel as if war were a more healthy state for man to live in than is this civilised security. I did not feel it at the time, though.

As I stood waiting for Sören that afternoon the men and horses came home from the field, and as I watched these 'men'—who were either boys or white-haired, all the real men being with the army—my heart misgave me. To whom could I trust my message? Sören himself when he came did not give me such sympathy as I had looked for from him. He had the soldier's dislike of 'civilians meddling with the war.'

'Very well, Sören,' I said angrily, 'let us pull our blankets over our heads not to hear them start to kill our men.'

And then I turned my back upon him, and made believe that I was going back into the house. But Sören stopped me, as I thought he would, and said that he would speak to the boys, and try to get one of them off with a message. 'It won't be easy, ma'am, for he will have to wait till they have all gone to roost, and then he will need a horse to take him there in time.'

'But you will manage it, Sören?' I said.

'I'll tell you when we have had our supper, ma'am,' was all the promise Sören would give me.

However, I returned somewhat comforted to the house, and sat down at the window in my bedroom—the only room in all the house that I might fairly call my own—waiting for a message from Sören. It came, but it was not what I had expected and hoped for. The maid who brought in the lamp said that immediately after supper all the men, including Sören, had been marched off to their rooms, with strict orders not to leave them on any condition whatever.

I said nothing but that I wanted no supper, only a cup of tea, and she went away. I remember that when next I moved my limbs were stiff, and it cost me an effort to loosen my clasped hands, and from this I conclude that I had been sitting perfectly motionless for more than an hour. But I had not been idle. I am not naturally good, as I know from this, that when taken aback in a sudden strait or emergency my first impulse is not to think of what I ought to do, but rather of what I may do to get safely out of it myself; but I do think that I have a strong true

wish to be good, for if I am given some little time for reflection I generally make up my mind to do what is right, and if my thoughts do not get muddled again I don't think I am bad at sticking to it.

As I sat there I gradually made up my mind—rightly or wrongly I cannot even now tell—that it was my duty to risk what I had to risk to save our men. I swallowed the tea the servant had brought me, and then I got up, and, crossing the hall, I went into the drawing-room that had been given up to the officers. The room was full of smoke, and they were playing cards when I entered; but as I crossed the room to where they sat they all rose and put down their cigars.

'Colonel,' I said, 'I find you have locked up all my men.'

'Only for the night, madam,' he said, 'and I am very sorry.

'It makes no difference to me whether you are sorry or not, I said, haughtily. 'I am not here to seek for sympathy. I come to ask how far you mean to go.'

He said that he did not quite understand my question.

'Am I and my maids prisoners too?' I asked.

'No, madam, certainly not; we are not waging war on ladies,' he said, and smiled in the way that always vexed me so.

'But on invalids,' I said, scornfully, child as I was. He looked inquiringly at me. 'I am thinking of my old servant with the wooden leg,' I went on.

'Oh, if he can be of any use to you, madam, he shall be let out immediately. Only you must promise that he shall not leave the place to-night.'

'I can promise you that,' I said; and then I went on as if I were a queen speaking to one of her subjects: 'Then will you see that orders are given to that end?'

Again I was vexed to see the amused expression on all their faces, being too great a fool to think of what a terrible come-down I should have had if they had taken me seriously. One of the young officers was dispatched with the Colonel's orders, and I stalked out of the room, the Colonel himself holding the door open for me.

A little later Sören came to the kitchen door, where cook and I stood waiting for him, each with a lantern, and while we went on what was believed to be a round of inspection to all the different sheds and houses I told him what I had decided to do. He did not approve of it, and I had to use all my authority to

make him consent to help me in carrying out my plan. But I must say this of him, that when once he had given in he helped me with a real good will. One of my greatest difficulties was how to get Malle, my riding-horse, out of the stable and on to the road. Taking her out the ordinary way was out of the question, as the door was sure to be watched, and we would have to cross part of the yard. The only possible way would be through the coachman's kitchen, which opened both into the stable and into the kitchen-garden; but then there were steps leading up to the kitchen from both sides, and Malle knew no more of this way out of the stable than she knew of the way into our drawing-room. However, as it was the only way we had to try it. So we made all our preparations; lifting the inner door from its hinges, and pushing the other one as far back as possible, we moved everything in the kitchen out of Malle's way, and at last we pulled two pairs of Sören's very thickest stockings over her hoofs. And all the while we moved about apparently quite unconcerned, talking in our natural voices, so as to make them think that we were only setting things right for the night.

When we had done cook and I went back to the house and made believe that we were fastening all the windows in the kitchen, while we were opening the one looking into the garden. Cook wept bitterly when I said Good-night to her, and it made me scold her, for I was somewhat nervous and frightened myself.

It took me some time to get properly dressed in one of my husband's suits, but at last I was ready, and before I put out the light I had a peep at myself in the mirror. Terrified as I certainly was at that time, I still felt a pang of disappointment at my own aspect. There certainly was nothing very chivalrous or imposing in my appearance as I stood there in clothes 'made to grow in,' with a pair of worsted stockings over my boots and up above my knees, and a soft felt hat pulled down over my ears.

I then put out my light, and the time that followed while I waited to see the lights disappear from all the windows in the house was the only time I seriously contemplated giving up my foolhardy enterprise. All my patriotic zeal died right away, and if my many big words to Sören had not stood on my side cowardice would have got the better of me. Ever since then I have had some trust in big words for keeping a middling-good man up to his mark.

It was close upon midnight before all was dark and quiet.

Shaking so that I could hardly stand on my legs, I crept out of my bedroom, along the passage, down the stairs, and into the kitchen. I got out through the window that opens just above the ground. There was still some bit of a moon, so that it was not quite dark as I walked through the shrubbery, out into the lane, into which the kitchen-garden opens, and where I was to meet Sören with Malle. They were there, and so excited was I that not for one moment did I wonder at it. Many and many a time since then have Sören and I discussed this night, and neither of us can tell how we managed as we did. Sören once told me that he did say his prayers, and just when he said 'Amen,' Malle got down the last step, but he would never allow that to account for it; he said that he had been taught by the clergyman who confirmed him that it was heresy to believe in miracles happening nowadays. I don't think so; I think most men are mean in this, that they will call out for help when they are in a stress, and then refuse to acknowledge that they got it when they are safely through with their difficulties. They are all—or most of them, at least—like the sailor who, falling from the top of the mast, called upon God to help him, and, being safely landed on the deck, only said, 'Oh, all right, I can very well help myself.' Sören was like him. He would have it that it was all his own skill that took Malle safely through the kitchen that night. My husband said it was luck! I know that whenever they are put on the test their deeds disown their words, but at those moments I never have the heart to catch them.

Sören wanted to see me safely through the wood on to the road, but I would not let him do it, for I had promised that he should not leave the place, and I considered the garden fence its border. So he helped me on to Malle's back, and we parted with heavy hearts but without many words. The time when I used to ride the unsaddled horses home from the meadows being not so very far back, I could still feel at home sitting on a horse like a boy, and, being born and bred in the country, I could stick to a narrow road running through a dark wood by keeping my eyes on the top of the trees as they stand out against the sky—which is the only way to do it. Malle, too, did her part without any mistake, though I am sure she felt uncomfortable in her stockings, and so we managed between us to get noiselessly and unnoticed on to the high road.

By the time we had reached it the moon had disappeared, and

it was raining. My hands and my feet were like so many lumps of ice, and I remember being suddenly aware that I was moaning in time to Malle's movements: 'Oh-I-can-not-do-it, Oh-I-can-not-do-it,' and stopping myself with a very stern 'Nonsense.'

I have never been able to find out the exact place where we had our fall, but I should say that we had been on our way for almost an hour when Malle went down heels over head, her feet having got entangled, I suppose, in the remnants of the worn-out stockings; at all events, we could not have been far from the cross-road where you leave the high road for Kiddelund. I was at first perfectly stunned by the fall, and some time went by before I thought of pulling myself together and moving from the spot where I had fallen. And when at last I got up, the pain in my right ankle was so agonising that I sat down again on the edge of the road, with my feet in the ditch and my head in my hands, unconscious of everything but the terrible pain. And not till Malle actually poked her soft hot muzzle into my ear did I recollect where I was, and that all my trouble would be lost if I remained there. I got up with the greatest difficulty, and, getting hold of Malle's mane, I crept along two or three steps till we hit upon one of the gravel piles on the roadside, and, after having rested a little, I managed from that to scramble on to Malle's back. When she took her very first step I realised that she was as lame as I was myself.

And then it was that I gave myself up to despair. I remained where I was, because I did not know what else to do; but I closed my eyes, and all I could think of, while Malle, who had more energy and perseverance than her mistress, manfully strode on, on her poor injured legs, was how to keep my head from tumbling off my shoulders. So dead tired and dejected were we that neither of us was the least startled by a sudden, 'Wer da? Halt!' called out to us from the darkness, straight in front of us. Nor did we think of stopping till we were actually stopped by two men on horseback barring the way. They said something to me that I could not take in, and so I made no answer. Then they struck a light in my face, and after that they had another consultation, and I think they laughed. After that they tied my hands in front of me, and, pulling Malle's reins over her head, one of them turned his horse and led us on, I never thought where. For not till we stopped in front of a door from which the light was pouring out upon us did I realise that we had been going in the wrong

direction, and that, being left to arrange matters all by herself, that faithful old Malle had carried me back to my own door.

At this discovery I felt absolutely no disappointment, for by this time it was I who was stunned, and my poor over-wrought body that had the upper hand. Lanterns were brought and the officers came out. They spoke to me and they spoke to one another, but what did I care? Not even when I understood that the Colonel was ordering me to dismount did I move, for I could not, no, not if they had pointed all their pistols at me. And when they lifted me out of the saddle and on to the ground, I simply collapsed and sat down in the dirt in the midst of them. They picked me up and carried me into the house, and I remember only feeling anxious about the covering of the armchair in which they placed me, which proves how much stronger was the woman than the hero in me.

Someone, I suppose it must have been the doctor, pushed back my hair—when we fell my hat had been lost and my hair had tumbled down—and washed my face and my hands in hot water. Then they gave me some brandy to drink, and, standing over me, they gave me some moments to recover before they spoke to me again.

And for all this kindness—if kindness it were—they had only a poor reward; for not only did they restore me to my senses, but they left me time enough to think it all over, and to make up my mind that I would have yet one other try to save our men. So when they began questioning me again I told them how, having found out what their plans were, I had made up my mind to warn our men, and, having no one to send, I had gone myself, hoping that I might get back unnoticed, which was all perfectly true. And now I come to what to me has always proved that God was on my side in this affair, for just when they were beginning to put awkward questions to me about our men, whom I had spoken to? where I had met with them? my head began to swim again and I fainted right away. And I think that God wished to save me from lying.

When I recovered my consciousness I was in bed in my own room, and the German doctor was standing over me nursing my poor bruised ankle. He did not speak till he had done, but then he sat down beside my bed, and, looking very kind and friendly—to me he seemed a very old man, though he was probably on the right side of fifty—he said: 'Now, little madam, do you think

you could answer just a few questions?' The way he said it made me feel like a poor little tired child, extremely sorry for myself; and, hiding my face in my hands, I began to weep so bitterly, that, fearing I suppose to set me off into hysterics, he refrained from any further interrogation and left me to the care of my own servants.

Nor did he trouble me when he came to see me the following day; and when, on the third day, he came to see me for the last time just before they were going off for good, it was I who began:

'Doctor,' I said, 'will you tell me whether you caught our men at Kiddelund?'

'Why,' he said, 'you don't think we went straight into the trap you set us?'

I said nothing and lay perfectly quiet; but there must have been that in my face which roused his suspicion, for suddenly his eyes seemed to light up with fun and delight, and he said: 'You do not mean to say that you had not been there at all?'

'I never said I had, doctor,' I said. But having assured me that our men were safely out of reach, he little by little drew the whole truth from me. He enjoyed it thoroughly like a real good joke, and said as we parted that he would vote that I should be hanged as soon as I were well enough to bear it.

From the Colonel I had a civil but very serious written message, warning me against ever repeating my attempt to serve our army in a like manner, as such attempts on the part of the population would certainly lead to very deplorable retaliations on the part of the enemy.

But when, two or three days later, I came into my drawing-room, I found on my table a small sword or dagger with a very fine silver hilt. It was run through a letter in which the officers begged my permission to present me with this sword of honour. A hot wave of shame and humiliation shot through my whole being. I burned the letter and put away the sword, and when I was strong enough I went and buried it in the wood.

Not till years after did I tell even Bertel of it, and I have never shown him or any living being the place where it lies.

I sometimes think I took it childishly and wrongly, knowing as I did that they meant kindly. But oh! when will men learn that they have not got it in their power to confer kindness on the people they are wronging?

MARY WESTENHOLZ.

WITH GEORGE WITHER IN HAMPSHIRE.

ALL who care for poetry at all have by heart a song which begins, 'Shall I, wasting in despair, die because a woman's fair?' All readers of Charles Lamb can recall the essay 'On the Poetical Works of George Wither.' Further, bare biographical facts can be collected, from a variety of sources, to enable one to form an idea of the Hampshire poet's life and work. Yet even then the knowledge gained may be unsatisfactory and insufficient; the intimate relation between a poet's work and his surroundings demands a fuller knowledge. Everyone goes, sooner or later, to Stratford-on-Avon, and it is essential to have Wordsworth in your pocket at Rydal and Grasmere. Therefore, with the self-imposed task of making a pilgrimage to the country of George Wither, I went, not long ago, to Hampshire, armed with a knowledge of the general facts of the poet's life.

In the first place, I had learnt that it was necessary to guard against confusion due to identity of name. Says the poet:

> In my time sixteen persons have I known
> Who did my Christian and my surname own.

Of these sixteen George Withers, four lived in Hampshire, one being the poet's father. And the George Wither with whom we are now concerned married a wife whose name was Elizabeth. He had a first cousin of the same name. Other Elizabeth Withers were his daughter, his daughter-in-law, his granddaughter, and his granddaughter-in-law! It was obvious that I should have to be on my guard.

Alton is known nowadays for its ales; of old it was connected with Quakers. Its history, considering the position it occupies, is comparatively uninteresting. A shot-riddled door in the church is a memorial of the attack made upon the town by Sir William Waller during the Civil War; but apart from this incident the town appears to have passed a tranquil existence. Several spots in the neighbourhood, however, are of much interest. Jane Austen once lived awhile at Chawton, a mile from Alton; and four miles further is Selborne, whither the student of Gilbert

White would naturally make pilgrimage. But another G. W. claimed my attention, and his house lay in the opposite direction.

The birth of George Wither, like that of the immortal Yellowplush, is 'wropped in a mistry.' The mother who has long been attributed to him—if one may express it so—was not married till the poet was sixteen years old. Her name, we are told, was Anne Searle, and at least two marriages of a lady of that name to a George Wither may be discovered recorded in Hampshire registers of the early seventeenth century. But neither of these can be the marriage of the parents of the poet, for chronological reasons. Plainly, the first thing to do was to oust this usurping mother.

The entire works of the poet amount to more than a hundred separate publications. To read them all though is a dry and, as a rule, an unprofitable task. But I considered myself repaid when I came across this:

> The families from whom I was designed
> To take my being, Thou hast now twice joined,
> And their two surnames, being joined together,
> Denominate my grandson, Hunt L'Wither.

In this passage he is celebrating the birth of his grandson, who was born to his son Robert Wither by Elizabeth, daughter of John Hunt of Fidding, or, as it is now called, Theddon. The meaning, clearly, is that the poet's parents were a Wither and a Hunt.

George Wither the elder was a younger son of the family of Manydown, near Wootton St. Lawrence, where there had been Withers since the time of Edward III. He made his home some ten miles away at Bentworth, where he married and settled down. Now Theddon, the home of his wife, is quite close to Bentworth; but whether the prospect of marriage brought him to Bentworth, or whether, when already settled there, he chose his lady from the neighbourhood, I cannot presume to say.

I walked up the hill from Alton to Theddon Grange on a fine spring day. The low chalky down is crowned with woods, in the front of which the old white grange forms a conspicuous landmark. Beyond I could not see while climbing; and once arrived at the top, the view to the east was the more attractive. Straight over Alton, now almost hidden, rise the heights by Farnham, where a keen vision may descry the castle, a mere speck. South

of this, the long jagged ridge of Hindhead stands out, hard and clear, where Hampshire, Sussex, and Surrey meet. Nearer, in the same direction, are the famous beeches of Selborne and the woods of Woolmer Forest. That is the view which Theddon Grange has seen for many years.

The way to Bentworth lies through the woods that form an impenetrable background to the white mansion, an idyllic scene for the lover and his lass, now or three hundred years ago. And this way there once went the young couple to the house at Bentworth, where their eldest child George was born, while the Spanish Armada was on its way to the shores of England.

Few could desire more pleasant or inspiriting surroundings than this little Hampshire village, perched on the top of a chalky hill among woods. Passing by the wall of the great house towards the church, I could well imagine, although it was early spring, that in a month or two the 'Bentworth beechy shadows,' gratefully remembered by Wither, would again darken the ground; but now the great muscular trunks stood up naked. And so into the churchyard, where a great yew stands by the porch, no doubt old enough to have shaded or sheltered George Wither. The church itself is distressingly new to the eye; but in the tower there are preserved four oak beams to which I should not care to assign an age.

Here we may search for grave or tablet bearing the name of Wither in vain; but the other name for which we are looking is there. The font is crowned with a pyramidal cover of beautiful old dark oak, polished only by time. Round three sides of the base runs the inscription: 'I . AM . GEVEN . BI . MARTHA . HVNT . ANNO 1605.' And on the wall is a memorial tablet to a Robert Hunt of the same time. Both of these may have been close relations of the Withers.

No doubt George the younger well knew his way to Theddon. When he became old enough to go to school, he must have passed by his mother's home constantly; for his school was at Colemore, eight miles to the south-west of Bentworth, and not far from Selborne, Here, says Anthony-à-Wood, 'he was educated in grammatical learning under the noted schoolmaster of those parts called John Greaves.' Wither remembers his 'tops and eldren guns' with no less vividness than his 'grammar rules,' in 'Lillie's Latin,' and in 'Camden's Greek'; and at the same time he did not forget his former pedagogue:

> If ever I do wish I may be rich—
> As oft perhaps such idle breath I spend—
> I do it not for anything so much
> As to have wherewithal to pay my friend . . .
> In willingness, in thanks, and gentle words.

In his young days he was surrounded by all that he could desire, and afterwards looked back fondly to the days

> When daily I on change of dainties fed,
> Lodged night by night upon an easy bed
> In lordly chambers, and had wherewithal
> Attendants forwarder than I to call,
> Who brought me all things needful; when at hand
> Hounds, hawks, and horses were at my command.
> Then choose I did my walks on hills or valleys,
> In groves, near springs, or in sweet garden alleys.

The poetry of his surroundings appealed to him already. Though we need not believe his statement, that he wrote his first love sonnet at the age of nine, there is little doubt that much of his best poetry was written quite early in life. When he ranged abroad, he liked the solitude of the Pool, at the place which he would

> By transposition name the ford of Arle;
> And out of which, along a chalky marl,
> That river trills, whose waters wash the fort
> In which brave Arthur kept his royal court.
> North-east, not far from this great pool, there lies
> A tract of beechy mountains, that arise
> With leisurely ascending to such height
> As from their tops the warlike Isle of Wight
> You in the ocean's bosom may espy,
> Though near two hundred furlongs thence it lie.

The Pool of Alresford is not a natural lake—it was made by Bishop Lucy in the reign of Richard I.—and when the boy-poet sat by its banks it was larger than it is now; yet it still suffices to attract flocks of wild duck, and even the Solent gulls; and the 'gaggling wild-goose' that Wither remembered may still be found there in winter,

> With all those flocks of fowls which to this day
> Upon those quiet waters breed and play.

Moorhen, coot, and dabchick, I could see as I wandered round the Pool, and one solitary heron, which Wither does not mention; perhaps, unlike Hamlet, he could not tell it from a hawk. Under a glass case at my inn I saw a great-crested grebe, which must have come from the Pool of Arle.

Following down the stream, we soon find that the Arle joins the Itchen; and so we come to Winchester, where 'brave Arthur kept his royal court.' Here in the deanery may still be seen, it is said, huge roof-timbers, which are remnants of three enormous oaks from Manydown which an ancient member of the Wither family sent to the Prior of St. Swithin's four hundred and fifty years ago. But the matter with which I was chiefly concerned while at Winchester was the will of George Wither the elder, now deposited in the registry there; for an inspection of this reveals the fact that his wife's name was Mary, and once for all disposes of Mistress Anne Searle. After bequeathing various sums of 'good and lawful monie of England' to his daughters Mary, Ann, Polyxena, and Jane, and to his sons James and Antony, the testator says, 'I geve all that shall remain of my lands and goods to my deserving and beloved wife Mary and to my beloved and eldest sone George, whom I doe by these make and appoint the executors of this my will and testament.' So, having reinstated Mary Hunt as the mother of the poet, let us to the ancestral home of the Wither family.

The modern traveller approaches Manydown from Basingstoke, which is prosaic, but, once outside the town itself, the face of the countryside is fair enough. There is more than one Roman camp near at hand, and a little distance to the north runs the old Roman road from Sarum to Silchester. A peculiar feature of the landscape is the tendency to exhibit clumps of Scotch firs, standing solitary on the crest of chalky hills or in the middle of ploughed fields. Four miles from Basingstoke, in a retired valley, lies Wootton St. Lawrence, where the little church is crowded with tablets and gravestones of past Withers. No less than three bear the name 'Gulielmus Wither de Manydown,' and a fourth commemorates 'William Wither, Esquire, died October 31, 1789,' the last of the direct line of Wither of Manydown. And in the vestry the old pew-opener showed me with pride the church plate —magnificent old silver, including a chalice presented, if I remember right, by a cousin of the poet in the early seventeenth century.

A footpath leads out of the churchyard over the fields to Manydown. The oldest part of the house is a red-brick quadrangle, two stories high, with an open grass-plot in the middle. Later generations have added considerably to the mansion, but the old court is still intact. Within doors, in one of the oldest

rooms, is a splendid carved oak chimneypiece, with the initials 'I. W.' and the date 1603; this would be the work of John Wither, the eldest brother of George, the poet's father.

The house is surrounded with a park, wooded by trees of many kinds. William of Wykeham, as I said before, resorted to Manydown in the fifteenth century to procure oak timbers for the reconstruction of his cathedral; but he did not lay the estate waste, and since then many magnificent trees have grown up. At the beginning of the last century an owner of Manydown planted seven cedars, which are in perfect growth at the present day.

Hither would young George Wither come in the holidays to hunt and hawk with his cousins. There were five sons then at Manydown, one of whom, James, was afterwards a fellow of New College, Oxford, and died young; a mural tablet in the chapel cloisters at New College commemorates his death: '*Jacobus Witer . . . spes modo nunc dolor amicorum, pulmonis vitio extinctus, Novemb. 15, A.D. 1627.*' No doubt these six boys enjoyed to the full the various delights that such a park as Manydown can afford; but there was one of them who was more influenced by the pastoral nature of his surroundings than any of his five cousins, and was moved by the

> enchanting spells that lie
> Lurking in sweet poesy,
> And to none else will appear
> But to those that worthy are.

From these rustic scenes he was sent to Oxford at the age of fifteen, but of his career at Magdalen College little is known beyond what he has himself recorded.

> There once arrived, in years and knowledge raw,
> I fell to wondering at each thing I saw;
> The palaces and temples that were due
> Unto the wise Minerva's hallowed crew,
> Their cloisters, walks, and groves; all which surveyed,
> And in my new admittance well apaid,
> I did, as other idle freshmen do,
> Long to go and see the Bell of Osney too;
> And yet for certainty I cannot tell
> That e'er I drank at Aristotle's well.

The bell of Osney Abbey was afterwards transferred to Christ Church—the famous 'Big Tom'; and Aristotle's Well, called Brumann's by later generations, is now dry.

Another phase of his life at Oxford he shows us in the ballad, 'I loved a lass, a fair one,' where he says—

In summer time to Medley
My love and I would go;
The boatmen there stood ready
My love and I to row;
For cream there would we call;
For cakes, and for prunes too;
But now, alas, she's left me,
Falero, lero, loo!

Medley was then a house on the banks of the Thames, just above the city; it has long since disappeared, but the name remains still attached to the weir by Port Meadow. The modern undergraduate does not go there for cream, cakes, and prunes; but not far away is Wytham, famous to this day for cream—and strawberries.

But having this experience, and withal
Achieved some cunning at the tennis-ball,
My tutor, telling me I was not sent
To have my time there vain and idly spent,
From childish humours gently called me in.

This tutor may have been John Warner, afterwards Bishop of Rochester; Anthony-à-Wood says Wither 'came under his tuition,' but there is a chronological difficulty which makes the statement improbable. Before we leave Oxford, let us turn for an hour into the Bodleian Library; for therein is a unique edition of one of Wither's poems, 'Fidelia.' This is the edition printed for private circulation, and it contains at the end the earliest form of the famous lyric,

Shall I, wasting in despair,
Die because a woman's fair?

The little book is now carefully bound in morocco, but the old vellum slip-covers are still preserved at the end. They and the fly-leaves are covered in contemporary handwriting with extracts from poems by Thomas Beedome, and with little half-sentences and flourishes, such as an idle man makes when he has a pen in his hand. This idle man has left his name on the book, 'Anthony Shepard.'

Wither had just begun to show a certain interest in the 'logic art,' when his university career was cut short. Before he was of the requisite standing to be

Admitted to acquire the low'st degree,

he was called home to 'learn to hold the plough.' This sudden return may have been due to a change in his father's prosperity, or it may have been the deed of a malevolent foe, as Wither himself hints, who, not content with the recall of the young scholar, urged his friends to 'learn him some mechanic trade.' Naturally his friends refused, and the distasteful life of agriculture continued.

I believe that much of his poetry was written about this time. The description of the Poole of Arle and the Bentworth roads is the work of one who knew them well:

> For pleasant was that pool, and near it then
> Was neither rotten marsh nor boggy fen.
> It was not overgrown with boist'rous sedge,
> Nor grew there rudely then along the edge
> A bending willow nor a prickly bush,
> Nor broad-leaf'd flag, nor reed, nor knotty rush.

And in the same poem, a few lines later:

> The pleasant way, as up those hills you climb,
> Is strewed o'er with marjoram and thyme,
> Which grows unset. The hedgerows do not want
> The cowslip, violet, primrose, nor a plant
> That freshly scents, as birch both green and tall;
> Low sallows, on whose bloomings bees do fall;
> Fair woodbines, which about the hedges twine;
> Smooth privet, and the sharp sweet eglantine.

Moreover, to this unknown period, before he went to London in 1608, must be assigned certain early travels. Two early poems of his, lost in manuscript, were called 'Iter Boreale' and 'Iter Hibernicum,' which probably consisted of poetical journals of visits to Scotland and Ireland. The latter country at least he certainly visited; he gives a hint that the 'mistress of Philarete,' whom he afterwards 'shadowed under the name of virtue,' was an Irish maiden; and the name of a third juvenile work—'Patrick's Purgatory,' which was also lost in manuscript—points to the same conclusion.

The poem called 'Fair Virtue' is thus described by Charles Lamb:

> A panegyric protracted through several thousand lines in the mouth of a single speaker, but diversified, so as to produce an almost dramatic effect, by the artful introduction of some ladies, who are rather auditors than interlocutors in the scene, and of a boy, whose singing furnishes pretence for an occasional change of metre; though the seven-syllable line, in which the main part of it is written, is that in which Wither has shown himself so great a master that I do not know that I am always thankful to him for the exchange.

We may notice in passing that Wither's command of the heptasyllabic metre had such an effect on Lamb that he often used it himself. He acknowledges that the 'Farewell to Tobacco is 'a little in the way of Wither.'

'Fair Virtue' is certainly a tribute to an actual 'mistress of Philarete'; the passion is far too real for one to think that the long and beautiful poem is a panegyric merely of an abstract quality, as Wither himself hints. But when he published it in 1622, it is typical of him that he should be ashamed of what he considered mere pastimes—'Juvenilia'—and so he preferred to let the world choose whether he meant 'Virtue only, whose loveliness is represented by the beauty of an excellent woman,' or whether she was really flesh and blood. But readers of the poem can have no doubts.

> Her true beauty leaves behind
> Apprehensions in my mind
> Of more sweetness than all art
> Or inventions can impart;
> Thoughts too deep to be expressed,
> And too strong to be suppressed,
> Which oft raiseth my conceits
> To so unbelievèd heights,
> That I fear some shallow brain
> Thinks my muses do but feign.
> Sure, he wrongs them if he do;
> For, could I have reached to
> So like strains as these you see,
> Had there been no such as she? . . .
> No; if I had never seen
> Such a beauty, I had been
> Piping in the country shades
> To the homely dairy-maids,
> For a country fiddler's fees,
> Clouted cream and bread and cheese.

So long as the shepherd Philarete sang of country shades and country loves, his muse did not desert him; he held poesy in honour, and celebrated in song, as Lamb says, 'the wealth and strength which this divine gift confers upon its possessor.' But when he departed from his native county, he left his muse behind him. Her influence remained with him awhile in London, but his 'troop of Satyrs,' as he called his 'Abuses Stript and Whipt,' frightened her away.

He was now a man, and thought to put away childish things. The work that was 'raised from the heat of youth' was done; that

to come was the 'trencher-fury of a rhyming parasite.' Thereafter *facit indignatio versum*; he could not remain unheard. On one occasion he thrust a petition into the hands of members of Parliament as they entered the House. Afterwards they retaliated, when Wither was in the Tower, by denying him pen, ink, and paper, and for once the prisoner did not exhaust his store of conceits; after covering three bread-trenchers with verses written in ochre—'trencher-fury,' indeed!—he was forced

> to sit and think
> What might be writ with paper, pen, and ink.

And so it is better not to follow him to London. The spectacle of his old age presents none of that peace which calmed the last blind years of his great contemporary, John Milton; he was rather an overgrown child of the State, alternately to be pampered and punished, now crying for the moon, now playing with the fire, and vociferously excusing and justifying himself when retribution threatened. Let us rather picture him in the wooded heights and deep lanes of Hampshire, when it was as yet unnecessary for him to seek to 'recapture the first fine careless rapture.'

Stretched under the Bentworth beeches, I like to recall Wither's meditation, 'whilst he was taking a pipe of tobacco,'

> Even as this pipe was formed out of clay
> And may be shapeless earth again this day,
> So may I too; so brittle that one touch
> May break it, this is; I am also such,
> Yet me it makes with thankfulness to heed
> How God wraps up a blessing in a weed.

But on returning to my inn I am forcibly reminded of his later days, when his life was embittered by imprisonment and 'his mind worn out with oppressions,' by seeing in a local paper: 'George Withers, a tramp, charged with soliciting alms on March —, 1902.'

When all is said, George Wither did but carry out the spirit of his motto, '*Nec habeo, nec careo, nec curo.*' The burden of his most famous and characteristic song is, 'What care I?' If only he had cared for his literary reputation, he would be entitled to a high place, even among the famous names of his day, for the undeniable sweetness of his lyrical power. Much of that power may be attributed to the influence and inspiration of the pleasant county of Hampshire.

F. SIDGWICK.

THE LITTLE BOY.

So soon as you shall have put away from you the glamour of the tiny girl, the spells of exquisite sorcery with which she enslaves you, the allurement of her coquetry and caprice, then you may face the question frankly, and acknowledge that the warmest corner of your heart is reserved, alike by reason and instinct, for the little boy. The little boy militant, tramping his nursery with drum and flag and scraps of patriotism; the little boy inconsolable over a broken toy, or shedding tears of tardy repentance upon a melted maternal breast. So easily abashed, so quickly elated; his credulity of glorious chances so illimitable, and his sum of human wealth a penny. He walks among bewildering realities and is companioned by rainbow dreams; the world presents to him a series of golden vistas down which he gazes, faintly cognisant of heroic deed and triumphant adventure at the further end. These are the roads into the past and the future; for the present there is all-desirable and all-sufficient play, upon which the daily details of life are mere excrescences. He is himself so sweet, so tender an anomaly. All those femininities, from petticoats to petulance, which the little girl wears by right, are his only for a brief space. There is continual war within him between these gentler attributes and the incipient virility which crops up at unexpected turns. Thus he draws one's affection by a twofold cord, by his loveliness, his shyness, his frailty, no less than those robuster traits of nascent man by which he puts his sisters to open shame as 'only girls.' He is the crowned king of childhood; his reign begins at two years old, and is over at eight or nine. By that time he has shaken off the last vestiges of sexless infancy, and is launched upon a new state of things: boy now, but little boy no longer.

He exists in two main types: the clinging, timorous, quiet child, whose unimpeachable virtue is of the negative kind—more often the result of feeble health than of sound doctrine; and the quicksilver creature, brilliant and restless, scrambling from one mischief into another as fast as his badly bruised legs will carry him. The first may develop into a prig, the last gravitates towards the *enfant terrible*: each in turn is adorable. Paradoxical

though it seem, pathos is the keynote of the little boy and all his works. The little girl is the woman in miniature; her characteristics are not changed but accentuated as years pass. Her toys are the prototypes of her future concerns (this holds good even among savage nations), and all her amusements are of a stereotyped, stay-at-home order. The mother, the housewife, the coquette in embryo, she carries out with more or less verisimilitude the details of these various rôles, and is in herself a standing example of the eternal fitness of things. But the little boy must suffer an explicit change before he can slough his babyhood. In him you shall see Man, the overlord, the dominant partner, held in all humiliation for the nonce under the thrall of women tutors and governors, and in bondage to the weak and beggarly elements. He is the victim of a present incapacity for those matters salient to his ultimate career. He is so chained about with 'Thou shalt nots' on the one hand, and with petticoat influence and little fears on the other, that the measure of his actual achievement under such harassing circumstances touches the marvellous.

'Every child is to a certain extent a genius,' says Schopenhauer, 'and every genius is to a certain extent a child'—not least so in a potency of overcoming obstacles. Those dare-devil acts with which the man-child asserts his manhood and alarms his anxious friends are counted and punished as crimes; and that somewhat inane nondescript, 'a good boy,' is usually, as I have said, he who lacks sufficient vitality for escapades. It is the mother, the aunt, the nurse, the governess, the elder sister—all his female tyrants, greatly misunderstanding, who are so 'down' upon the little boy for his heinous transgressions of the nursery code. His own sex are laxer or more lenient; they also have been in Arcadia. You may notice this fact in police reports, in newspaper accounts of those accidents to which the foolhardiness of the little boy renders him, alas! so frequently liable. He is there constantly alluded to, with a veiled tenderness, as 'the little fellow,' 'the poor little fellow,' 'the unfortunate child.' There is no such sympathy hinted when anything befalls a little girl, but rather a grumbling air, as who should say, 'Que diable fait-elle dans cette galère?' But one reads, 'The little boy' (of six) 'cried so bitterly when his dog was brought to the hammer that the auctioneer refused to sell it'; and there was a recent story of Boers raiding a farm and all its live stock, when the little boy of the house, flinging his arms round his beloved pony, defied all and sundry to take it at

the peril of their lives. The Boers had been little boys themselves; they laughed, and departed in peace. Even the stony-hearted magistrate relents and Justice nods. 'A pretty little boy, eight years old, was charged by his father at West London with being of such a disposition as to be entirely beyond parental control. Mr. Plowden, on seeing the little fellow, said he did not intend to relieve a father of the responsibility of controlling a child of eight. *The Father*: "I can't control him." *The Magistrate*: "You must control him." The father went on to state that he had beaten the child and kept him without food. Mr. Plowden said starving a little boy was the way to send him off. The father said the boy had stolen five shillings from his mother, and spent it riding in omnibuses all day long. Mr. Plowden supposed the money was gone, and said the father should keep it out of his way and *give him plenty of pudding*. The boy was discharged.' This is only a sample of many such cases. Eight years old, by the way, seems to be a significant period in the little boy's history. The other day a child of eight actually received the Royal Humane Society's medal for having saved, at various times, three other babes from drowning.

The little girl is certainly mother of the woman, but as to the child being father of the man, that I utterly gainsay. As a rule he is vastly superior to the man, in observation, conscience, sense of beauty, and all those other qualities which fade into the light of common day and leave him but a dull worldling at thirty who was a coruscating brilliance at six. Goethe said that 'if children grew up according to early indications, we should have nothing but geniuses'; and the inevitable decrescence of this natural ability is one of the losses which men regret most bitterly, though they assign other names to it. Sometimes it is the playfulness of childhood they deplore, sometimes its invincible innocence. 'I cannot reach it,' Henry Vaughan writes of that vanished spring:

> I cannot reach it, and my straining eye
> Dazzles at it, as at eternity.
> Were now that Chronicle alive,
> Those white designs which children drive,
> And the thoughts of each harmless hour,
> With their content, too, in my power,
> Quickly would I make my path even,
> *And by mere playing go to Heaven.*

The little boy in the abstract is called Tommy—always Tommy.

He may figure under other aliases, but you know he is Tommy at heart. In a score of Du Maurier's drawings you come across the upper-class Tommy, with his bewitching misdeeds and conversational *faux pas*. Then there is the middle-class child, who sees more of his parents, and who, if he be brought up in the country, inhabits a perpetual wonderland. The poor little slum *gamin*, whose end is so often tragic, enjoys his abbreviated Tommyhood as much as any. He knows of no better state—and one can always play. One would hesitate to apply to some of these starveling, crippled little beings Herbert Spencer's theory that superfluous energy is the cause of play; and yet with closer knowledge one discovers them playful on the very verge of extinction. Play is the child's primal necessity of life, his means of development, his all in all. Tommy is usually kindly in his play, and has a special weakness for babies, his protective masculine tendency asserting itself. A little boy in charge of a perambulator, such as may frequently be seen in mean streets, is a hundredfold kinder than a little girl in the same position; less apt to neglect his duty, having more sense of responsibility, and manifesting a peculiar gentleness in handling his infant.

Tommy's chief characteristics, I take it, are three: an insatiable curiosity, an inveterate desire to play, and a strong bias towards eating not wisely but too well. Imagination is not common to every child in the same degree, and one must confess that playfulness, imitativeness, and various other transient attributes are shared by the young of most animals. But it is this amazing inquisitive propensity which makes our hero such a mine of extensive and peculiar information. Let some work be afoot in the roads or streets—pipe-laying, wire-fixing, what-not—you shall see every little boy straining to dislocation at the arm of his disgusted nurse. It is absolutely necessary that he should acquaint himself with how and why these men are employed, and in what manner the work is done. The little girl in sublime indifference passes with averted eyes. Exactitude as to word, and accuracy as to *raison d'être* are also strongly marked in Tommy, and are the correlatives of his curiosity. It is this exactitude which hands down the traditional nursery songs, almost *ipsissima verba*, from generation to generation. One of the queerest instances of the thirst for irrelevant information is to be found in those little boys, just able to write, who perch with pencil and paper on the suburban railway fences, and laboriously register the name of every engine

that passes. Aware of these abstruse researches, one is the less surprised at Peter, *ætat.* two and a half, on being taken by his mother to Kew Gardens, addressing an astounded under-gardener with 'You see those *Chionodoxas*? Well, we've lots of them at home!'—or at Victor, about four, heard discussing with Robin, a year older, the mysteries of triple-expansion boilers; or at Dicky, aged three, using as a war-cry those blessed words *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Of course, four-fifths of this miscellaneous lore is only attained by the child transforming himself into a walking note of interrogation. 'The little boy who was gored to death by a mad bull for asking questions,' held up as an awful warning to little Paul Dombey, suffered vicariously for all his brethren since the world began.

Between Tommy's ideals of right and wrong there runs a thick line of demarcation, too soon to become obliterated in this life of mixed motives. His conscience is divided into two camps, that of guilt and that of conscious rectitude; and whatsoever is not of faith to him most emphatically is sin. The notion that the Age of Faith is past is a fond thing vainly invented. We all have dwelt in it, and our children are now its inheritors. 'Nothing can stagger a child's faith; he accepts the clumsiest substitute, and can swallow the most staring incongruities.' But at the same time his logic is merciless, and he will push a conclusion or drive an argument to such justly demonstrable issues as to land his embarrassed parent in a *cul-de-sac*. To silence his questions is not to put a stopper on his reasoning, and it is often better worth while patiently to thrash out a question with him, as far as his intelligence will allow, than to shut him up with brusque rebuff. 'The existence of human childhood, in its long period of plasticity and educability, has made possible human civilisation'; and one is at least bound to furnish the little son with some explanation of the ordinary phenomena of life. That is no more than his due. At the same time one should forbear to press him too closely for a definite reason or statement about anything. An excellent example of the child at bay is that little boy of Wordsworth's, who, driven into a corner as to why he preferred Kilve to some other place, replied, 'At Kilve there was no weather-cock, and that's the reason why!'

His fears are not the least pathetic part of him; they are as a rule so obvious, so rudimentary, lightly aroused and augmented, and yet in some cases of so recondite and incomprehensible a

nature, that it goes hard to comfort them out of sight, or douche them with cold common-sense. Explain away and whittle down as you will, the wisdom of the ages beats in vain against the child's inviolable certitude. Yet the small impenitence in abbreviated 'trousis,' who defies authority and despises personal chastisement immediately before and after its application, may be reduced to moral pulp by the apparition of some terror inadvertently evoked. I have known the most scandalous rebel, knowing no awe of parent or policeman (the latter is usually a name to conjure with), quail and grovel before the recollection of the Böas. (The Böas is a fearful wildfowl depicted in Jusserand's 'English Novel of the Time of Shakespeare,' where it figures in the act of devouring a little astonished boy.) 'The devil you know,' says the Irish proverb, 'is better than the devil you don't know.' Besides, in the child's mind, 'bus-horses and Böases are on an equal footing of probability, nor does he vex himself to discriminate between real and possible monsters. The late H. J. Byron, the dramatist, used to recount with delight a fragmentary dialogue overhead at some railway station. *First Little Boy:* 'Oh, yes, and we had great games, you know. They were all divided into two parties, you know, and one party stayed in the room, and the other party went outside.' *Second Little Boy:* 'And what did they do?' *First:* 'Oh, they came in and pretended to *be* things, you know.' *Second:* 'What sort of things?' *First:* 'Oh, well, er—*Dwagons*, foh instance!'

I have not touched upon the little boy at school; personally I consider that nobody should go to school at all until he be past eight. One can very well acquire a modicum of the three R's by easy stages at home; and for the rest, why waste the irretrievable hours of the play-years in acquiring a reluctant knowledge of things which are not presently essential? Education is at best a mitigated blessing. The reduction of so many germinal excellences to a dead level of scholastic attainment is one of the unhappiest certainties of the little boy's future; and 'I am afraid,' to quote Jean Paul Richter, 'of every adult hairy hand and fist that paws in among this tender pollen of child-flowers, shaking off here one colour, there another, so as to produce the right variegated carnation.'

Consider how large the little boy looms in the public eye down all the centuries. Just as the spontaneous loyalty of the nation is now focussed in Prince Edward of Wales, so all English history is punctuated by the stories, the calamities, the tragedies

of little boys. Arthur of Brittany, for example, and the Princes in the Tower were actually beyond the age-limit I have specified, but in popular imagination they are quite small 'kiddies,' about eight years old. No amount of Higher Criticism has affected the little boys of Biblical narrative; there is still the same undying interest, the same touching intonation about the stories of Samuel and his little coat, and the small Josiah wondering under his heavy crown, and the Shunammite's child, who came back from the harvest field moaning 'My head! my head!' And where would the painters of Christendom be, lacking their Gesulino? He is hardly ever represented as a Baby—nearly always as a well-grown Child of two to three years, instinct with that divine pensiveness and sometimes with that enchanting roguery which are the poles of the little boy's behaviour. After all, the large-eyed innocence of the quiescent child, 'dragged about by nurses in a pleasing stupor,' is less charming than the April storms and sunshines of the tiny scamp. Cherubs, Cupids, Holy Innocents, what you will, little boys have been the trump cards of the artist down to the ubiquitous 'Bubbles.' The poets are rather addicted to squander verbiage upon the irresponsive little girl; but the plucky little Buccleuch, in the 'Lay of the Last Minstrel,' is a glorious boy, and has a few worthy mates, the most lovable among them being that charming unhappy child of Coventry Patmore's, who, sent to bed 'with hard words and unkissed, His mother, who was patient, being dead,' is found asleep with wet eyelashes beside his treasures:

> For, on a table drawn beside his head,
> He had put, within his reach,
> A box of counters and a red-veined stone,
> A piece of glass abraded by the beach,
> And six or seven shells,
> A bottle with bluebells,
> And two French copper coins, ranged there with careful art
> To comfort his sad heart.

There are many little boys familiar to us in English fiction, each a joy for ever. Some are Dickens's, several are Mrs. Ewing's; there is Tom in the 'Water Babies.' One of the best recent ones is 'Q's' Taffy in the 'Ship of Stars.' None of them, however, can hold a candle to Thackeray's. When you recollect Georgy Osborne and little Rawdon, Tommy Newcome (afterwards the Colonel) and Clivey Newcome and Tommykin or 'Boy' of the third generation—do you remember how 'Codd' Colonel and Clive put Boy to bed and heard his prayers, after the rout of the

Campaigner?—you must needs acknowledge that here is the master painter. Not with one casual sketch, but with a hundred intimate details here and there, Thackeray gives you his little boys' hands to hold—those warm, grubby, velvety hands. He is always eager to abandon his grown-ups for a while, to talk about their children. The objective little boy is indubitably Thackeray's, even as the subjective one is Stevenson's. In Thackeray's drawings—notably in 'Dr. Birch's School'—we are shown the diminutive scapegraces and scaramouches just as he knew them fifty years ago, with wide, questioning eyes and chubby contours, strangely attired in little coats and skirts which know no modern equivalent. Even the last generation went petticoated till eight years old, writhing in resentment against the ignominy of 'girls' clothes.' Why they were so clad I cannot imagine; it was a clumsy and unmeaning costume. Nor can any mother of sons whom I have interrogated afford a better answer than that 'it was the custom.' Nowadays, many a rosy rogue has barely scraped through two twelvemonths when the *toga virilis* descends upon him, and the proportions of his nether man are moulded into tight-fitting breeches of inconceivable skimpiness—small clothes in every sense of the word. I do not see that this unduly accelerates his ageing; it gives him self-respect, and decides the struggling fact of his boyhood.

But the literature of Tommy is inexhaustible. He is the hero of countless nursery rhymes, which do not take much account of little girls, but dwell lovingly on Little Jack Horner pulling out his plum, Little Tom Tucker singing for his supper (a habit of desultory singing is one of Tommy's dearest traits), Little Boy Blue asleep in the hay, or Wee Willie Winkie scampering in his night-gown. The nursery tales bear these company; and at the top of the tree we have Shakespeare, with his 'sweet villain,' his 'gallant child,' Mamillius in the 'Winter's Tale.' 'No, I'll none of you,' Mamillius says to the Court ladies. 'You'll kiss me hard, and speak to me as if I were a baby still.' He proposes to tell them a story. 'I have one of sprites and goblins. . . . There was a man dwelt by a churchyard—I will tell it softly!' His perfections evoke that wonderful description by Polixenes of his own son:

> He's all my exercise, my mirth, my matter:
> Now my sworn friend, and then mine enemy;
> My parasite, my soldier, statesman, all
> He makes a July's day short as December·
> And, with his varying childness, cures in me
> Thoughts that would thick my blood.

There are other children presented by Shakespeare, such as Arthur, and those ill-fated little princes whose murderers wept to tell the tale, and poor William in the 'Merry Wives,' subjected to sudden *vivâ-voce* examination in his Latin grammar, which is surely very vile treatment on a holiday. But Mamillius remains the best. Lastly, there is Stevenson. The boy of the 'Child's Garden of Verses' is the ultimate type of the imaginative child; yet Stevenson never introduced children as mere 'copy' into his works of fiction. This may have been from an access, or an excess, of that *maxima reverentia* so keenly felt by the child-lover. It is unusual to have a young fellow of twenty-five crying, 'Oh, I have such a longing for children of my own; and yet I do not think I could bear it if I had.' He stays up half the night on one occasion, trying to find the home of a little lost three-year-old—carries him about, puts his coat round him, and gets him a currant scone, and 'spirits him up with good words.' But he said his say for good in the 'Child's Garden'; there the little boy plays, to all time, in the simplicity of Eden.

Poor Tommy, so soon to leave behind him that idyllic existence! Petticoated or kilted, in little sailor suits, and linen smocks, and velvet coats, and miniature reefers, he marches blindly on his destiny. Soon he will run his dear little head against that blank wall of foregone conclusions which shuts out fairyland from a workaday world. His blocks and lead soldiers will be left in the irrevocable past, badly exchanged for ties and cigarettes. He may become a general, or a diplomat, or a broker's man; but he can never be a pirate any more. Let us make much of him while we can. Rudely healthy, all dimples and noise—convalescent, with thin legs and plaintive eyes; dark-haired and ruddy, red-haired and freckly, flower-like gold and rose, he is fundamentally the same—always actuated by the joyful abiding principles of Tommydom, and consumed by that unabateable hunger for toys. Deal gently, you grown-up people, with his negligences and ignorances; turn an indulgent look upon his buoyant naughtiness, his sweet unreasonableness, his desperate gallantry in the pursuit of dangerous delights. The immortal Child himself, that celestial ebullience of laughing mischief, was modelled after his likeness. Love was once a little boy.

MAY BYRON.

THE FOUR FEATHERS.[1]

BY A. E. W. MASON.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE HOUSE OF STONE.

THESE were the days before the great mud wall was built about the House of Stone in Omdurman. Only a thorn zareeba as yet enclosed that noisome prison and the space about it. It stood upon the eastern border of the town, surely the most squalid capital of any Empire since the world began. Not a flower bloomed in a single corner. There was no grass nor the green shade of any tree. A brown and stony plain burnt by the sun, and, built upon it, a straggling narrow city of hovels crawling with vermin and poisoned with disease.

Between the prison and the Nile no houses stood, and at this time the prisoners were allowed, so long as daylight lasted, to stumble in their chains down the half-mile of broken sloping earth to the Nile bank, so that they might draw water for their use and perform their ablutions. For the native or the negro then escape was not so difficult. For along that bank the dhows were moored, and they were numerous; the river traffic, such as there was of it, had its harbour there, and the wide foreshore made a convenient market place. Thus the open space between the river and the House of Stone was thronged and clamorous all day, captives rubbed elbows with their friends, concerted plans of escape, or then and there slipped into the thickest of the crowd and made their way to the first blacksmith, with whom the price of iron outweighed any risk he took. But even on their way to the blacksmith's shop their fetters called for no notice in Omdurman. Slaves wore them as a daily habit, and hardly a street in all that long brown treeless squalid city was ever free from the clink of a man who walked in chains.

But for the European escape was another matter. There were

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not so many white prisoners but that each was a marked man. Besides, relays of camels stationed through the desert, much money, long preparations, and, above all, devoted natives who would risk their lives were the first necessities for their evasion. The camels might be procured and stationed, but it did not follow that their drivers would remain at the stations; the long preparations might be made, and the whip of the gaoler overset them at the end by flogging the captive within an inch of his life on a suspicion that he had money; the devoted servant might shrink at the last moment. Colonel Trench began to lose all hope. His friends were working for him, he knew. For at times the boy who brought his food into the prison would bid him be ready; at times, too, when at some parade of the Khalifa's troops he was shown in triumph as an emblem of the destiny of all the Turks, a man perhaps would jostle against his camel and whisper encouragements. But nothing ever came of the encouragements. He saw the sun rise daily beyond the bend of the river behind the tall palm trees of Khartum and burn across the sky, and the months dragged one after the other.

On an evening towards the end of August, in that year when Durrance came home blind from the Soudan, he sat in a corner of the enclosure watching the sun drop westwards towards the plain with an agony of anticipation. For however intolerable the heat and burden of the day, it was as nothing compared with the horrors which each night renewed. The moment of twilight came, and with it Idris-es-Saier, the great negro of the Gawaamah tribe, and his fellow gaolers.

'Into the House of Stone!' he cried.

Praying and cursing with the sound of the pitiless whips falling perpetually upon the backs of the hindmost, the prisoners jostled and struggled at the narrow entrance to the prison house. Already it was occupied by some thirty captives, lying upon the swamped mud floor or supported against the wall in the last extremities of weakness and disease. Two hundred more were driven in that night and penned there till morning. The room was perhaps thirty feet square, of which four feet were occupied by a solid pillar supporting the roof. There was no window in the building; a few small apertures near the roof made a pretence of giving air, and into this foul and pestilent hovel the prisoners were packed, screaming and fighting. The door was closed upon them, utter darkness replaced the twilight, so that

a man could not distinguish even the outlines of the heads of the neighbours who wedged him in.

Colonel Trench fought like the rest. There was a corner near the door which he coveted at that moment with a greater fierceness of desire than he had ever felt in the days when he had been free. Once in that corner he would have some shelter from the blows, the stamping feet, the bruises of his neighbour's shackles; he would have, too, a support against which to lean his back during the ten interminable hours of suffocation.

'If I were to fall! If I were to fall!'

That fear was always with him when he was driven in at night. It worked in him like a drug producing madness. For if a man once went down amid that yelling, struggling throng he never got up again—he was trampled out of shape. Trench had seen such victims dragged from the prison each morning; and he was a small man. Therefore he fought for his corner in a frenzy like a wild beast, kicking with his fetters, thrusting with his elbows, diving under this big man's arm, burrowing between two others, tearing at their clothes, using his nails, his fists, and even striking at heads with the chain which dangled from the iron ring about his neck. He reached the corner in the end, streaming with the heat and gasping for breath; the rest of the night he would spend in holding it against all comers.

'If I were to fall!' he gasped. 'O God, if I were to fall!' and he shouted aloud to his neighbour—for in that clamour nothing less than a shout was audible—'Is it you, Ibrahim?' and a like shout answered him, 'Yes, Effendi.'

Trench felt some relief. Between Ibrahim, a great tall Arab of the Hadendoas, and Trench a friendship born of their common necessities had sprung up. There were no prison rations at Omdurman; each captive was dependent upon his own money or the charity of his friends outside. To Trench from time to time there came money from his friends brought secretly into the prison by a native who had come up from Assouan or Suakin; but there were long periods during which no help came to him, and he lived upon the charity of the Greeks who had sworn conversion to the Mahdist faith, or starved with such patience as he could. There were times, too, when Ibrahim had no friend to send him his meal into the prison. And thus each man helped the other in his need. They stood side by side against the wall at night.

'Yes, Effendi, I am here,' and groping with his hand in the black darkness he steadied Trench against the wall.

A fight of even more than common violence was raging in an extreme corner of the prison, and so closely packed were the prisoners that with each advance of one combatant and retreat of the other the whole jostled crowd swayed in a sort of rhythm, from end to end, from side to side. But they swayed fighting to keep their feet, fighting even with their teeth, and above the din and noise of their hard breathing, the clank of their chains and their imprecations, there rose now and then a wild sobbing cry for mercy, or an inhuman shriek stifled as soon as uttered, which showed that a man had gone down beneath the stamping feet. Missiles, too, were flung across the prison, even to the foul earth gathered from the floor, and, since none knew from what quarter they were flung, heads were battered against heads in the effort to avoid them. And all these things happened in the blackest darkness.

For two hours Trench stood in that black prison ringing with noise, rank with heat, and there were eight hours to follow before the door would be opened and he could stumble into the clean air and fall asleep in the zareeba. He stood upon tiptoe that he might lift his head above his fellows, but even so he could barely breathe, and the air he breathed was moist and sour. His throat was parched, his tongue was swollen in his mouth and stringy like a dried fig. It seemed to him that the imagination of God could devise no worse hell than the House of Stone on an August night in Omdurman. It could add fire, he thought, but only fire.

'If I were to fall!' he cried, and as he spoke his hell was made perfect, for the door was opened, and Idris-es-Saier appeared in the opening.

'Make room,' he cried, 'make room,' and he threw fire among the prisoners to drive them from the door. Lighted tufts of dried grass blazed in the darkness and fell upon the bodies of the prisoners. The captives were so crowded they could not avoid the missiles, in places even they could not lift their hands to dislodge them from their shoulders or their heads.

'Make room,' cried Idris. The whips of his fellow gaolers enforced his command, the lashes fell upon all within reach, and a little space was cleared within the door. Into that space a man was flung and the door closed again.

Trench was standing close to the door; in the dim twilight which came through the doorway he had caught a glimpse of the new prisoner, a man heavily ironed, slight of figure, and bent with suffering.

'He will fall,' he said, 'he will fall to-night. God, if I were to fall!' and suddenly the crowd swayed against him, and the curses rose louder and shriller than before.

The new prisoner was the cause. He clung to the door with his face against the panels, through the chinks of which actual air might come. Those behind plucked him from his vantage, jostled him, pressed him backwards that they might take his place. He was driven, as a wedge is driven by a hammer, between this prisoner and that, until at last he was flung against Colonel Trench.

The ordinary instincts of kindness could not live in the nightmare of that prison house. In the day time, outside, the prisoners were often drawn together by their bond of a common misery, the faithful as often as not helped the infidel. But to fight for life during the hours of darkness without pity or cessation was the one creed and practice of the House of Stone. Colonel Trench was like the rest. The need to live, if only long enough to drink one drop of water in the morning and draw one clean mouthful of fresh air, was more than uppermost in his mind. It was the only thought he had.

'Back,' he cried violently, 'back, or I strike,' and as he wrestled to lift his arm above his head that he might strike the better, he heard the man who had been flung against him incoherently babbling English.

'Don't fall,' cried Trench, and he caught his fellow captive by the arm. 'Ibrahim, help! God, if he were to fall!' and while the crowd swayed again, and the shrill cries and curses rose again, deafening the ears, piercing the brain, Trench supported his companion and, bending down his head, caught again after so many months the accent of his own tongue. And the sound of it civilised him like the friendship of a woman.

He could not hear what was said; the din was too loud. But he caught, as it were, shadows of words which had once been familiar to him, which had been spoken to him, which he had spoken to others—as a matter of course. In the House of Stone they sounded most wonderful. They had a magic, too. Meadows of grass, cool skies, and limpid rivers rose in grey, quiet pictures

before his mind. For a moment he was insensible to his parched throat, to the stench of that prison house, to the oppressive blackness. But he felt the man whom he supported totter and slip, and again he cried to Ibrahim:

'If he were to fall!'

Ibrahim helped as only he could. Together they fought and wrestled until those about them yielded, crying:

'Shaitan! They are mad!'

They cleared a space in that corner, and, setting the Englishman down upon the ground, they stood in front of him lest he should be trampled. And behind him upon the ground Trench heard every now and then in the lull of the noise the babble of English.

'He will die before morning,' he cried to Ibrahim, 'he is in a fever!'

'Sit beside him,' said the Hadendoa. 'I can keep them back.'

Trench stooped and squatted in the corner, Ibrahim set his legs well apart, and guarded Trench and his new friend.

Bending his head, Trench could now hear the words. They were the words of a man in delirium, spoken in a voice of great pleading. He was telling some tale of the sea, it seemed.

'I saw the riding lights of the yachts—and the reflections shortening and lengthening as the water rippled—there was a band, too, as we passed the pier head. What was it playing? Not the overture—and I don't think that I remember any other tune. . . .' And he laughed with a crazy chuckle. 'I was always pretty bad at appreciating music, wasn't I? Except when you played,' and again he came back to the sea. 'There was the line of hills upon the right as the boat steamed out of the bay—you remember there were woods on the hillside—perhaps you have forgotten. Then came Bray, a little fairyland of lights close down by the water at the point of the ridge . . . you remember Bray, we lunched there once or twice, just you and I before everything was settled . . . it seemed strange to be steaming out of Dublin Bay, and leaving you a long way off to the north among the hills . . . strange, and somehow not quite right . . . for that was the word you used when the morning came behind the blinds—it is not right that one should suffer so much pain . . . the engines didn't stop, though, they just kept throbbing and revolving and clanking as though nothing had

happened whatever . . . one felt a little angry about that . . . the fairyland was already only a sort of golden blot behind . . . and then nothing but sea and the salt wind . . . and the things to be done.'

The man in his delirium suddenly lifted himself upon an elbow and with the other hand fumbled in his breast as though he searched for something. 'Yes, the things to be done,' he repeated in a mumbling voice, and he sank to unintelligible whisperings with his head fallen upon his breast.

Trench put an arm about him and raised him up. But he could do nothing more, and even to him, crouched as he was close to the ground, the noisome heat was almost beyond endurance. In front the din of shrill voices, the screams for pity, the swaying and struggling went on in that appalling darkness. In one corner there were men singing in a mad frenzy, in another a few danced in their fetters, or rather tried to dance; in front of Trench Ibrahim maintained his guard; and beside Trench there lay in the House of Stone, in the town beyond the world, a man who one night had sailed out of Dublin Bay past the riding lanterns of the yachts, and had seen Bray, that fairyland of lights, dwindle to a golden blot. The thought of the sea and the salt wind, the sparkle of light as the water split at the ship's bows, the illuminated deck, perhaps the sound of a bell telling the hour, and the cool, dim night about and above, so wrought upon Trench that, practical unimaginative creature as he was, for very yearning he could have wept. But the stranger at his side began to speak again.

'It is funny that those three faces were always the same . . . the man in the tent with the lancet in his hand, and the man in the back room off Piccadilly . . . and mine. Funny, and not quite right. No, I don't think that was quite right either. They get quite big, too, just when you are going to sleep in the dark—quite big, and they come very close to you, and won't go away . . . they rather frighten one. . . .' And he suddenly clung to Trench with a close, nervous grip, like a boy in an extremity of fear. And it was in the tone of reassurance that a man might use to a boy that Trench replied, 'It's all right, old man, it's all right.'

But Trench's companion was already relieved of his fear. He had come out of his boyhood, and was rehearsing some interview which was to take place in the future.

'Will you take it back?' he asked, with a great deal of hesi-

tation and timidity. 'Really? The others have, all except the man who died at Tamai. And you will, too!' He spoke as though he could hardly believe some piece of great good fortune which had befallen him. Then his voice changed to that of a man belittling his misfortunes. 'Oh, it hasn't been the best of times, of course. But then one didn't expect the best of times. And at the worst one had always the afterwards to look forward to . . . supposing one didn't run. . . . I'm not sure that when the whole thing's balanced it won't come out that you have really had the worst time. I know you . . . it would hurt you through and through, pride and heart and everything, and for a long time just as much as it hurt that morning when the daylight came through the blinds. And you couldn't do anything! And you hadn't the afterwards to look forward to . . . it was all over and done with for you . . .' and he lapsed again into mutterings.

Colonel Trench's delight in the sound of his native tongue had now given place to a great curiosity as to the man who spoke and what he said. Trench had described himself a long while ago, as he stood opposite the cabstand in the south-west corner of St. James's Square: 'I am an inquisitive, methodical person,' he had said, and he had not described himself amiss. Here was a life history, it seemed, being unfolded to his ears, and not the happiest of histories, perhaps indeed with something of tragedy at the heart of it. Trench began to speculate upon the meaning of that word 'afterwards,' which came and went among the words like the *motif* in a piece of music, and very likely was the life *motif* of the man who spoke them.

In the prison the heat became stifling, the darkness more oppressive, but the cries and shouts were dying down; their volume was less great, their intonation less shrill; stupor and fatigue and exhaustion were having their effect. Trench bent his head again to his companion, and now heard more clearly.

'I saw your light that morning . . . you put it out suddenly . . . did you hear my step on the gravel? . . . . I thought you did, it hurt rather,' and then he broke out into an emphatic protest. 'No, no, I had no idea that you would wait. I had no wish that you should. Afterwards perhaps, I thought, but nothing more, upon my word. Sutch was quite wrong. . . . Of course there was always the chance that one might come to grief oneself—get killed, you know, or fall ill and die—before one asked you to take your feather back; and then there wouldn't

even have been a chance of the afterwards. But that is the risk one had to take.'

The allusion was not direct enough for Colonel Trench's comprehension. He heard the word 'feather,' but he could not connect it as yet with any action of his own. He was more curious than ever about that 'afterwards'; he began to have a glimmering of its meaning, and he was struck with wonderment at the thought of how many men there were going about the world with a calm and commonplace demeanour, beneath which were hidden quaint fancies and poetic beliefs, never to be so much as suspected, until illness deprived the brain of its control.

'No, one of the reasons I never said anything that night to you about what I intended was, I think, that I did not wish you to wait or to have any suspicion of what I was going to attempt.' And then expostulation ceased, and he began to speak in a tone of interest. 'Do you know? It has only occurred to me since I came to the Soudan, but I believe that Durrance cared.'

The name came with something of a shock upon Trench's ears. This man knew Durrance! He was not merely a stranger of Trench's blood, but he knew Durrance even as Trench knew him. There was a link between them, they had a friend in common. He knew Durrance, had fought in the same square with him perhaps, at Tokar or Tamai or Tamanib, just as Trench had done! And so Trench's curiosity as to the life history in its turn gave place to a curiosity as to the identity of the man. He tried to see, knowing that in that black and noisome hovel sight was impossible. He might hear, though, enough to be assured. For if the stranger knew Durrance, it might be that he knew Trench as well. Trench listened; the sound of the voice, high-pitched and rambling, told him nothing. He waited for the words and the words came.

'Durrance stood at the window, after I had told them about you, Ethne.' And Trench repeated the name to himself. It was to a woman, then, that his new-found compatriot, this friend of Durrance, in his delirium imagined himself to be speaking—a woman named Ethne. Trench could recall no such name; but the voice in the dark went on.

'All the time when I was proposing to send in my papers, after the telegram had come, he stood at the window of my rooms with his back to me, looking out across the park. I fancied he

blamed me. But I think now he was making up his mind to lose you. . . . I wonder.'

Trench uttered so startled an exclamation that Ibrahim turned round.

'Is he dead?'

'No, he lives, he lives.'

It was impossible, Trench argued. He remembered quite clearly Durrance standing by a window with his back to the room. He remembered a telegram coming which took a long while in the reading—which diffused among all except Durrance an inexplicable suspense. He remembered, too, a man who spoke of his betrothal and of sending in his papers. But surely this could not be the man. Was the woman's name Ethne? A woman of Donegal—yes; and this man had spoken of sailing out of Dublin Bay. He had spoken, too, of a feather.

'Good God!' whispered Trench. 'Was the name Ethne? Was it? Was it?'

But for a while he received no answer. He heard only talk of a mud-walled city and an intolerable sun burning upon a wide round of desert, and a man who lay there all the day with his linen robe drawn over his head, and slowly drew one face towards him across three thousand miles, until at sunset it was near, and he took courage and went down into the gate. And after that four words stabbed Trench.

'Three little white feathers' were the words. Trench leaned back against the wall. It was he who had devised that message. 'Three little white feathers,' the voice repeated. 'This afternoon we were under the elms down by the Lennon River—do you remember, Harry?—just you and I. And then came three little white feathers; and the world's at an end.'

Trench had no longer any doubts. The man was quoting words, and words, no doubt, spoken by this girl Ethne on the night when the three feathers came. 'Harry,' she had said. 'Do you remember, Harry?' Trench was certain.

'Feversham!' he cried, 'Feversham!' And he shook the man whom he held in his arms, and called to him again. 'Under the elms by the Lennon River.' Visions of green shade touched with gold and of the sunlight flickering between the leaves caught at Trench and drew him like a mirage in that desert of which Feversham had spoken. Feversham had been under the elms of the Lennon River on that afternoon before the feathers came, and

he was in the House of Stone at Omdurman. But why? Trench asked himself the question, and was not spared the answer.

'Willoughby took his feather back'—and upon that Feversham broke off. His voice rambled. He seemed to be running somewhere amid sandhills, which continually shifted and danced about him as he ran, so that he could not tell which way he went. He was in the last stage of fatigue too, so that his voice in his delirium became querulous and weak. 'Abou Fatma!' he cried; and the cry was the cry of a man whose throat is parched and whose limbs fail beneath him. 'Abou Fatma! Abou Fatma!' He stumbled as he ran, picked himself up, ran and stumbled again; and about him the deep, soft sand piled itself into pyramids, built itself into long slopes and ridges, and levelled itself flat with an extraordinary and a malicious rapidity. 'Abou Fatma!' cried Feversham; and he began to argue in a weak, obstinate voice. 'I know the wells are here—close by—within half a mile. I know they are—I know they are.'

The clue to that speech Trench had not got. He knew nothing of Feversham's adventure at Berber; he could not tell that the wells were the wells of Obak, or that Feversham, tired with the hurry of his travelling and after a long day's march without water, had lost his way among the shifting sandhills. But he did know that Willoughby had taken back his feather; and he made a guess as to the motive which had brought Feversham now to the House of Stone. Even on that point, however, he was not to remain in doubt; for in a while he heard his own name upon Feversham's lips.

Remorse seized upon Colonel Trench. The sending of the feathers had been his invention, and his alone. He could not thrust the responsibility of his invention upon either Willoughby or Castleton; it was just his doing. He had thought it rather a shrewd and clever stroke, he remembered, at the time—a vengeance eminently just. Eminently just no doubt it was, but he had not thought of the woman. He had not imagined that she might be present when the feathers came. He had, indeed, almost forgotten the episode. He had never speculated upon the consequences, and now they rose up and smote the smiter.

And his remorse was to grow. For the night was not nearly at its end. All through the dark, slow hours he supported Feversham and heard him talk. Now Feversham was lurking in the bazaar at Suakin, and during the siege.

'During the siege,' thought Trench. 'While we were there, then, he was herding with the camel-drivers in the bazaar, learning their tongues, watching for his chance. Three years of it!'

At another moment Feversham was slinking up the Nile to Wadi Halfa with a zither in the company of some itinerant musicians, hiding from any who might remember him and accuse him with his name. Trench heard of a man slipping out from Wadi Halfa, crossing the Nile, and wandering, with the assumed manner of a lunatic, southwards, starving and waterless, until one day he was snapped up by a Mahdist caravan and dragged to Dongola as a spy. And at Dongola things had happened of which the mere mention made Trench shake. He heard of leather cords which had been bound about the prisoner's wrists, and upon which water had been poured until the cords swelled and the wrists burst; but this was among the minor brutalities. Trench waited for the morning as he listened, wondering whether, indeed, it would ever come.

He heard the bolts dragged back at the last; he saw the door open, and the good daylight. He stood up, and, with Ibrahim's help, protected this new comrade until the eager rush was past. Then he supported him out into the zareeba. Worn, wasted in body and face, with a rough beard straggled upon his chin, and his eyes all sunk and very bright, it was still Harry Feversham. Trench laid him down in a corner of the zareeba where there would be shade, and in a few hours shade would be needed. Then with the rest he scrambled to the Nile for water, and brought it back. As he poured it down Feversham's throat Feversham seemed for a moment to recognise him. But it was only for a moment; and the incoherent tale of his adventures began again. Thus, after five years, and for the first time since Trench had dined as Feversham's guest in the high rooms overlooking St. James's Park, the two men met in the House of Stone.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

PLANS OF ESCAPE.

For three days Feversham rambled and wandered in his talk, and for three days Trench fetched him water from the Nile, shared his food with him, and ministered to his wants; for three nights, too, he stood with Ibrahim and fought in front of Feversham in

the House of Stone. But on the fourth morning Feversham waked to his senses, and looking up with his own eyes, saw bending over him the face of Trench. At first the face seemed a part of his delirium—one of those nightmare faces which were used to grow big and had come so horribly close to him in the dark nights of his boyhood as he lay in bed. He put out a weak arm and thrust it aside. But he gazed about him. He was lying in the shadow of the prison-house, and the hard blue sky above him, the brown bare trampled soil on which he lay, and the figures of his fellow-prisoners dragging their chains or lying prone upon the ground in some extremity of sickness, gradually conveyed their meaning to him. He turned to Trench, caught at him as if he feared the next moment would snatch him out of reach, and then he smiled.

'I am in the prison at Omdurman,' he said. 'Actually in the prison! This is Umm Hagar, the House of Stone. It seems too good to be true.'

He leaned back against the wall with an air of extreme relief. To Trench the words, the tone of satisfaction in which they were uttered, sounded like some sardonic piece of irony. A man who plumed himself upon indifference to pain or pleasure—who posed as a being of so much experience that joy and trouble could no longer stir a pulse or cause a frown, and who carried his pose to perfection—such a man, thought Trench, might have uttered Feversham's words in Feversham's voice. But Feversham was not that man, his delirium had proved it. The satisfaction, then, was genuine, the words were sincere. The peril of Dongola was past, he had found Trench, he was in Omdurman. That prison-house was his longed-for goal, and he had reached it. He might have been dangling on a gibbet hundreds of miles away down the stream of the Nile, with the vultures perched upon his shoulders, the purpose for which he lived quite unfulfilled. But he was in the enclosure of the House of Stone in Omdurman.

'You have been here a long while,' he said.

'Three years.'

Feversham looked round the zareeba. 'Three years of it,' he murmured. 'I was afraid that I might not find you alive.'

Trench nodded.

'The nights are the worst, the nights in there. It's a wonder any man lives through a week of them. Yet I have lived through a thousand nights.' And even to him who had endured them

his endurance seemed incredible. 'A thousand nights of the House of Stone!' he exclaimed.

'But we may go down to the Nile by daytime,' said Feversham, and he started up with alarm as he gazed at the thorn zareeba. 'Surely we are allowed so much liberty. I was told so. An Arab at Wadi Halfa told me.'

'And it's true,' returned Trench. 'Look!' He pointed to the earthen bowl of water at his side. 'I filled that at the Nile this morning.'

'I must go,' said Feversham, and he lifted himself up from the ground. 'I must go this morning,' and since he spoke with a raised voice and a manner of excitement, Trench whispered to him:

'Hush! There are many prisoners here, and among them many tale bearers.'

Feversham sank back on to the ground as much from weakness as in obedience to Trench's warning.

'But they cannot understand what we say,' he objected in a voice from which the excitement had suddenly gone.

'They can see that we talk together and earnestly. Idris would know of it within the hour, the Khalifa before sunset. There would be heavier fetters and the courbatch if we spoke together at all. Lie still. You are weak, and I, too, am very tired. We will sleep, and later in the day we will go together down to the Nile.'

Trench lay down beside Feversham and in a moment was asleep. Feversham watched him, and saw, now that his features were relaxed, the marks of those three years very plainly in his face. It was towards noon before he awoke.

'There is no one to bring you food?' he asked, and Feversham answered:

'Yes. A boy should come. He should bring news as well.'

They waited until the gate of the zareeba was opened and the friends or wives of the prisoners entered. At once that enclosure became a cage of wild beasts. The gaolers took their dole at the outset. Little more of the 'aseeda'—that moist and pounded cake of dhurra which was the staple diet of the town—than was sufficient to support life was allowed to reach the prisoners, and even for that the strong fought with the weak and the group of four did battle with the group of three. From every corner men gaunt and thin as skeletons hopped and leaped as quickly as the weight of their chains would allow them towards the entrance.

Here one weak with starvation tripped and fell, and, once fallen, lay prone in a stolid despair, knowing that for him there would be no meal that day. Others seized upon the messengers who brought the food, and tore it from their hands, though the whips of the gaolers laid their backs open. There were thirty gaolers to guard that enclosure, each armed with his rhinoceros-hide courbatch, but this was the one moment in each day when the courbatch was neither feared, nor, as it seemed, felt.

Among the food bearers a boy sheltered himself behind the rest and gazed irresolutely about the zareeba. It was not long, however, before he was detected; he was knocked down, and his food snatched from his hands; but the boy had his lungs, and his screams brought Idris-es-Saier himself upon the three men who had attacked him.

'For whom do you come?' asked Idris, as he thrust the prisoners aside.

'For Joseppi, the Greek,' answered the boy, and Idris pointed to the corner where Feversham lay. The boy advanced, holding out his empty hands as though explaining how it was that he brought no food. But he came quite close, and, squatting at Feversham's side, continued to explain with words. And as he spoke he loosed a gazelle skin which was fastened about his waist beneath his jibbeh, and he let it fall by Feversham's side. The gazelle skin contained a chicken, and upon that Feversham and Trench breakfasted and dined and supped. An hour later they were allowed to pass out of the zareeba and make their way to the Nile. They walked slowly and with many halts, and during one of these Trench said:

'We can talk here.'

Below them at the water's edge some of the prisoners were unloading dhows, others were paddling knee-deep in the muddy water. The shore was crowded with men, screaming and shouting and excited for no reason whatever. The gaolers were within view, but not within earshot.

'Yes, we can talk here. Why have you come?'

'I was captured in the desert, on the Arbaîn road,' said Feversham slowly.

'Yes, masquerading as a lunatic musician who had wandered out of Wadi Halfa with a zither. I know. But you were captured by your own deliberate wish. You came to join me in Omdurman. I know.'

'How do you know?'

'You told me. During the last three days you have told me much,' and Feversham looked about him suddenly in alarm. 'Very much,' continued Trench. 'You came to join me because five years ago I sent you a white feather.'

'And was that all I told you?' asked Feversham anxiously.

'No,' Trench replied, and he dragged out the word. He sat up while Feversham lay on his side, and he looked towards the Nile in front of him, holding his head between his hands, so that he could not see or be seen by Feversham. 'No, that was not all—you spoke of a girl, the same girl of whom you spoke when Willoughby and Durrance and I dined with you in London a long while ago. I know her name now—her Christian name. She was with you when the feathers came. I had not thought of that possibility. She gave you a fourth feather to add to our three. I am sorry.'

There was a silence of some length, and then Feversham replied slowly:

'For my part I am not sorry. I mean I am not sorry that she was present when the feathers came. I think on the whole that I am rather glad. She gave me the fourth feather, it is true, but I am glad of that as well. For without her presence, without that fourth feather snapped from her fan, I might have given up there and then. Who knows? I doubt if I could have stood up to the three long years in Suakin. I used to see you and Durrance and Willoughby and many men who had once been my friends, and you were all going about the work which I was used to. You can't think how the mere routine of a regiment to which one had become accustomed, and which one cursed heartily enough when one had to put up with it, appealed as something very desirable. I could so easily have run away. I could so easily have slipped on to a boat and gone back to Suez. And the chance for which I waited never came—for three years.'

'You saw us?' said Trench. 'And you gave no sign?'

'How would you have taken it if I had?' And Trench was silent. 'No, I saw you, but I was careful that you should not see me. I doubt if I could have endured it without the recollection of that night at Ramelton, without the feel of the fourth feather to keep the recollection actual and recent in my thoughts. I should never have gone down from Obak into Berber. I should certainly never have joined you in Omdurman.'

Trench turned quickly towards his companion.

'She would be glad to hear you say that,' he said. 'I have no doubt she is sorry about her fourth feather, sorry as I am about the other three.'

'There is no reason that she should be, or that you either should be sorry. I don't blame you or her,' and in his turn Feversham was silent and looked towards the river. The air was shrill with cries, the shore was thronged with a motley of Arabs and negroes, dressed in their long robes of blue and yellow and dirty brown, the work of unloading the dhows went busily on; across the river and beyond its fork the palm trees of Khartum stood up against the cloudless sky, and the sun behind them was moving down to the west. In a few hours would come the horrors of the House of Stone. But they were both thinking of the elms by the Lennon River and a hall of which the door stood open to the cool night and which echoed softly to the music of a waltz, while a girl and a man stood with three white feathers fallen upon the floor between them; the one man recollected, the other imagined the picture, and to both of them it was equally vivid. Feversham smiled at last.

'Perhaps she has now seen Willoughby, perhaps she has now taken his feather.'

Trench held out his hand to his companion.

'I will take mine back now.'

Feversham shook his head.

'No, not yet,' and Trench's face suddenly lighted up. A hope, which had struggled up in his hopeless breast during the three days and nights of his watch, a hope which he had striven to repress for very fear lest it might prove false, sprang to life.

'Not yet—then you *have* a plan for our escape,' and the anxiety returned to Feversham's face.

'I said nothing of it,' he pleaded, 'tell me that! When I was delirious in the prison there, I said nothing of it, I breathed no word of it? I told you of the four feathers, I told you of Ethne, but of the plan for your escape I said nothing.'

'Not a single word. So that I myself was in doubt, and did not dare to believe,' and Feversham's anxiety died away. He had spoken with his hand trembling upon Trench's arm, and his voice itself had trembled with alarm.

'You see if I spoke of that in the House of Stone,' he exclaimed, 'I might have spoken of it in Dongola. For in

Dongola as well as in Omdurman I was delirious. But I didn't, you say—not here at all events. So perhaps not there either. I was afraid that I should—how I was afraid! There was a woman in Dongola who spoke some English—very little, but enough. She had been in the "Kauneesa" of Khartum when Gordon ruled there. She was sent to question me. I had unhappy times in Dongola.'

Trench interrupted him in a low voice. 'I know. You told me things which made me shiver,' and he caught hold of Feversham's arm and thrust the loose sleeve back. Feversham's scarred wrists confirmed the tale.

'Well, I felt myself getting light-headed there,' he went on. 'I made up my mind that of your escape I must let no hint slip. So I tried to think of something else with all my might when I was going off my head.' And he laughed a little to himself.

'That was why you heard me talk of Ethne,' he explained.

Trench sat nursing his knees and looking straight in front of him. He had paid no heed to Feversham's last words. He had dared now to give his hopes their way.

'So it's true,' he said in a quiet wondering voice. 'There will be a morning when we shall not drag ourselves out of the House of Stone. There will be nights when we shall sleep in beds—actually in beds. There will be——' He stopped with a sort of shy air like a man upon the brink of a confession. 'There will be—something more,' he said lamely, and then he got up on to his feet.

'We have sat here too long. Let us go forward.'

They moved a hundred yards nearer to the river and sat down again.

'You have more than a hope. You have a plan of escape?' Trench asked eagerly.

'More than a plan,' returned Feversham. 'The preparations are made. There are camels waiting in the desert ten miles west of Omdurman.'

'Now?' exclaimed Trench, 'Now?'

'Yes, man, now. There are rifles and ammunition buried near the camels, provisions and water kept in readiness. We travel by Metemneh, where fresh camels wait, from Metemneh to Berber. There we cross the Nile; camels are waiting for us five miles from Berber. From Berber we ride in over the Kokreb Pass to Suakin.'

'When?' exclaimed Trench. 'Oh! when, when?'

'When I have strength enough to sit a horse for ten miles and a camel for a week,' answered Feversham. 'How soon will that be? Not long, Trench, I promise you not long,' and he rose up from the ground.

'As you get up,' he continued, 'glance round. You will see a man in a blue linen dress, loitering between us and the gaol. As we came past him he made me a sign. I did not return it. I shall return it on the day when we escape.'

'He will wait?'

'For a month. We must manage on one night during that month to escape from the House of Stone. We can signal him to bring help. A passage might be made in one night through that wall, the stones are loosely built.'

They walked a little further and came to the water's edge. There amid the crowd they spoke again of their escape, but with the air of men amused at what went on about them.

'There is a better way than breaking through the wall,' said Trench, and he uttered a laugh as he spoke and pointed to a prisoner with a great load upon his back who had fallen upon his face in the water, and, encumbered by his fetters, pressed down by his load, was vainly struggling to lift himself again. 'There is a better way. You have money?'

'Ai, ai!' shouted Feversham, roaring with laughter as the prisoner half rose and soused again. 'I have some concealed on me. Idris took what I did not conceal.'

'Good!' said Trench. 'Idris will come to you to-day or to-morrow. He will talk to you of the goodness of Allah, who has brought you out of the wickedness of the world to the holy city of Omdurman. He will tell you at great length of the peril of your soul and of the only means of averting it, and he will wind up with a few significant sentences about his starving family. If you come to the aid of his starving family and bid him take fifteen dollars of your store, you may get permission to sleep in the zareeba outside the prison. Be content with that for a night or two. Then he will come to you again, and again you will assist his starving family, and this time you will ask for permission for me to sleep in the open too. Come! There's Idris shepherding us home.'

It fell out as Trench had predicted. Idris read Feversham an abnormally long lecture that afternoon. Feversham learned that now God loved him, and how Hicks Pasha's army had been

destroyed. The holy angels had done that; not a single shot was fired, not a single spear thrown by the Mahdi's soldiers. The spears flew from their hands by the angels' guidance and pierced the unbelievers. Feversham heard for the first time of a most convenient spirit, Nebbi Khiddr, who was the Khalifa's eyes and ears, and reported to him all that went on in the gaol. It was pointed out to Feversham that if Nebbi Khiddr reported against him he would have heavier shackles riveted upon his feet and many unpleasant things would happen. At last came the exordium about the starving children, and Feversham begged Idris to take fifteen dollars.

Trench's plan succeeded. That night Feversham slept in the open, and two nights later Trench lay down beside him. Overhead was a clear sky and the blazing stars.

'Only three more days,' said Feversham, and he heard his companion draw in a long breath. For a while they lay side by side in silence, breathing the cool night air, and then Trench said:

'Are you awake?'

'Yes.'

'Well,' and with some hesitation he made that confidence which he had repressed on the day when they sat upon the foreshore of the Nile. 'Each man has his particular weak spot of sentiment, I suppose. I have mine. I am not a marrying man, so it's not sentiment of that kind. Perhaps you will laugh at it. It isn't merely that I loathe this squalid, shadeless, vile town of Omdurman, or the horrors of its prison. It isn't merely that I hate the emptiness of those desert wastes. It isn't merely that I am sick of the palm trees of Khartum, or these chains, or the whips of the gaolers. But there's something more. I want to die at home, and I have been desperately afraid so often that I should die here. I want to die at home—not merely in my own country, but in my own village, and be buried there under the trees I know, in the sight of the church and the houses I know, and the trout stream where I fished when I was a boy. You'll laugh, no doubt.'

Feversham was not laughing. The words had a queer ring of familiarity to him, and he knew why. They never had actually been spoken to him, but they might have been, and by Ethne Eustace.

'No, I am not laughing,' he answered. 'I understand.' And he spoke with a warmth of tone which rather surprised Trench.

And indeed an actual friendship sprang up between the two men, and it dated from that night.

It was a fit moment for confidences. Lying side by side in that enclosure, they made them one to the other in low voices. The shouts and yells came muffled from within the House of Stone and gave to them both a feeling that they were well off. They could breathe, they could see, no low roof oppressed them. They were in the cool of the night air. That night air would be very cold before morning and wake them to shiver in their rags and huddle together in their corner. But at present they lay comfortably upon their backs with their hands clasped behind their heads, and watched the great stars and planets burn in the blue dome of sky.

'It will be strange to find them dim and small again,' said Trench.

'There will be compensations,' answered Feversham with a laugh, and they fell to making plans of what they would do when they had crossed the desert and the Mediterranean and the Continent of Europe, and had come to their own country of dim small stars. Fascinated and enthralled by the pictures which the simplest sentence, the most commonplace phrase, through the magic of its associations was able to evoke in their minds, they let the hours slip by unnoticed. They were no longer prisoners in that barbarous town which lay a murky stain upon the solitary wide spaces of sand; they were in their own land, following their old pursuits. They were standing outside clumps of trees, guns in their hands, while the sharp cry 'Mark! mark!' came to their ears. Trench heard again the unmistakable rattle of the reel of his fishing-rod as he wound in his line upon the bank of his trout-stream. They talked of theatres in London and the last plays which they had seen, the last books which they had read six years ago.

'There goes the Great Bear,' said Trench suddenly. 'It is late.' The tail of the constellation was dipping behind the thorn hedge of the zareeba. They turned over on their sides.

'Three more days,' said Trench.

'Only three more days,' Feversham replied. And in a minute they were neither in England nor the Soudan. The stars marched to the morning unnoticed above their heads. They were lost in the pleasant countries of sleep.

(To be continued.)